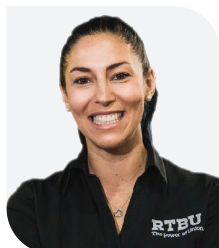


RTBU EXPRESS

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

State Secretary

BUDGETS 2021/22: WHAT'S IN IT FOR RAIL?

While the federal budget forecast a bleak outlook for wages and little investment towards the rail industry, the recent Victorian state budget has stepped up to recognise the needs of our industry and benefits of proactive spending for the broader economy.

The 2021 budget has continued to develop and consolidate on the track record of investment seen by the Victorian Government. Key new announcements include:

- Public transport accessibility and amenity upgrades*
- New metropolitan trains (X'Trapolis 2.0) to be built in Ballarat*
- Boost in infrastructure maintenance funding for V/Line network*
- New train maintenance facility to support VLocity maintenance* (South Dynon)
- Additional handrails to be installed across the tram fleet
- Life extensions and sustainability for Comeng, Classic Fleet, A and Z-Class trams
- Numerous capacity improvements, signal

upgrades, rationalisation works, level crossing upgrades to raise standards, reliability, speeds and prepare to maximise future project benefits

- Additional funding for tram infrastructure upgrades to support the deployment of Next Generation Trams including a new maintenance facility in the north-west, upgrades to Southbank Depot and land acquisition for new power substations.

- Installation of tram/car separation along St Kilda Road to minimise collisions and disruptions

*Indicates initiatives campaigned for by the RTBU

Further to these investments, previously announced measures saw continued funding into the forward estimates to further and progress their completion.

These items include but are not limited to additional funding for further development of suburban rail loop, HCMT, Melbourne Airport Link and Metro Tunnel, along with further exploration of transport connections into Fishermans Bend.

The rail and transport industry continues to

see its renaissance, with further planning for more freight on trains, a port rail connection, intermodal hubs around Melbourne and the state, all partnered with the Government's ongoing commitment to keeping passenger transport running and available as an essential service, our industry continues to provide opportunities for members to reap the benefits of strong outcomes.

The RTBU will continue to monitor developments from the budget, organise new workplaces and ensure safety standards are upheld across the network.

Should members be aware of any valuable information, identified needs or issues within your workplace, or rumoured network changes, we encourage you to inform the union office or your Organiser so we can go the extra mile and advocate on your behalf.

Luba Grigorovitch
State Secretary



RTBU
The power of Union

Operations | Infrastructure | Workshops | Salaried

rtbuvic.com.au | (03) 8630 9100

Level 2, 365 Queen Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000 [RTBU@rtbuvic.com.au](mailto: RTBU@rtbuvic.com.au) F 03 8630 9122





Darren Galea

Organiser

OUT AND ABOUT

As usual I have been out and about this month catching up with members across Victoria, including the monthly delegates meetings and Member representations.

\$100 late payment

V/Line members would be aware of the ongoing dispute regarding the \$100 late payment. We have now employed a new Industrial Officer, Amanda Swayn. She is taking over the matter, and would like to know how wide spread this issue is. We are encouraging members to get in contact via email amanda.swayn@rtbuvic.com.au by the 14th of June.

Luggage handling

Luggage bag handling has historically always been a conductor duty, and we have fought to keep this role in the hands of conductors.

At the beginning of COVID-19, luggage handling was temporarily stopped in relation to minimising risk to workers. Now that we are seemingly out of the worst of the pandemic, consultation regarding the reintroduction of luggage handling has occurred. The RTBU has put a strong focus on ensuring that workers can handle luggage safely without risk of illness or injury. There will be further a risk assessment conducted between V/Line and representatives of the RTBU.



Contact us

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Melbourne, VIC 3000

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& Labour Hire**
Organiser: Bryan Evans
Organiser: Joe Dennis

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Industrial Officer
Amanda Swayn

**Industrial Officer /
Organiser**
Vik Sharma





Vik Sharma

Industrial Officer / Organiser

Victor Moore

Senior Branch Vice-President

METRO STATIONS RESTRUCTURE OVERVIEW

As members are aware, Metro is attempting to cut jobs and sack/displace dozens of essential frontline rail workers, all under the guise of a 'restructure'. The first 'restructure' proposal was announced on 14 April 2021 via Teams in which dozens of workers were informed 'online' that their jobs would be made redundant and they would either lose their jobs or would be displaced. These are the workers who risked their lives during the pandemic to keep Victoria moving. Some of them have devoted their entire lives to the rail industry and have been working in stations for decades.

Subsequently, we lodged a dispute and invoked the status quo provision of the enterprise agreement. Metro in their wisdom decided to ignore the status quo provision and undermine workers' fundamental right. Consequently, we initiated proceedings in the Federal Court and as a result, Metro gave an undertaking that the status quo would be respected and they would

not implement any changes until this dispute was resolved in the Fair Work Commission. The matter before the Commission is to determine whether can Metro circumvent the 'joint review' process (agreed to by the parties in the last bargaining round) and implement these changes. We believe if Metro were to do that, they will be breach of the Enterprise Agreement.

At the time of writing this article, we have had two Commission conciliation conferences, the next one is scheduled for 10 June 2021. In the Commission, we have raised issues pertaining to the flaws of the proposal, how the proposal keeps changing, issues with rosters, potential breach of the EA, genuineness of the proposal, workers' lives and livelihoods, unfairness of the process etc. We will continue to report back to the members after each development in this saga.

We must commend all the members and delegates for their continued and unconditional

support and for standing their ground against this greedy corporation. The solidarity from all areas of rail was manifestly demonstrated in the rallies. The workers sent a clear message that the mighty rail industry has sustained many such blows in the past and still stands strong and will always do.

Without a scintilla of doubt, it can be stated that the only driving force of such decision making is the pursuit of more dollars. This is a consequence of allowing capitalist forces to run such a critical public function. Metro's actions reinforce the notion that public transport should be for the public and by the public.

We will keep you posted as the matter develops.

If you have any questions, feel free to

Victor Moore on **0400 092 807** or

Vik Sharma on **0413 363 923**.



Amanda Swayn

Industrial Officer

RTBU INDUSTRIAL OFFICER

I am thrilled to be working with the RTBU as the Industrial Officer.

In the short period which I have been working with the RTBU, we have been knee deep in Federal Court proceedings, Fair Work Commission conciliations, worksite visits, advice phone calls, Zoom meetings, right of entry permit admin, agreement negotiations, disputes notifications, rallies, and picket lines. It is fantastic.

I am a qualified lawyer, and hold a Bachelor of Business and Commerce, Graduate Diploma in Labour Relations Law and Juris Doctor. My passion for fairness, equality, and the power of collective action comes from my proud union family. I was raised by two incredible parents

who worked hard to provide their children with a better life.

I have been lucky enough to be working in industrial relations for over a decade, including most recently at the Australian Education Union, the 'Young Workers Centre' in Trades Hall and the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union.

During this time, I have assisted many members in a wide range of workplace disputes involving including unfair dismissals, general protections, discrimination, bullying and harassment, sexual harassment, introduction of change, redundancy, flexible work arrangements and more.

As an industrial officer, I have also had a significant amount of experience in enterprise agreement negotiations, including at the bargaining table and in drafting clauses.

I am looking forward to contributing to the improvements of working conditions for RTBU members. If the past month is any indication of what is to come, I suspect I will have plenty of opportunity to do so.

I look forward to meeting as many Members as possible, please pop into the office and say hi next time you are around.



Michael Langlands

Metro Track Delegate

HARRY CHARALABOS ANTONIADIS - 54 YEARS

Mr 'Harry' Charalabos Antoniadis came to Australia on 16 December 1966.

He recalls starting at the Spotswood gang in 1967 swinging hammers, knocking in dogs and using forks to pack sleepers which he insists was hard work like no other, in the days of the red rattlers.

Harry then moved to the track gang based in Burnley which he looked after the section from Richmond to Camberwell, soon moving to the thermit welding gang which had 18 - 20 men working which he worked in for two years.

Harry then moved to the track maintenance Gang for 16 - 18 years where he would be in a tie gang re-laying sleepers, he still recalls being at the old North Melbourne Junction depot opposite the old signal box where he saw his first fatality in which he will never forget.

Harry recently had his 80th birthday and he was saddened that his old friend George Zangalis couldn't attend because of his late passing and has always said that George was iconic for the Victorian railways and one of his great friends.

Harry has nothing but praise for George as he looked after him when he came to Australia and being an immigrant, he still recalls dinner dances for immigrants that they both would organise. Harry has a fond memory about the time that they went to State Parliament for the amenities committee to organise toilets and facilities as Harry was an executive delegate for the state branch of Victoria.

Harry was lucky enough to attend the Clyde Carmen College in Albury Wodonga with George regarding union matters which he will never forget.

Harry's later years were followed by the new Caulfield Mega Depo where he would start to wind down as a flagman, he has become an iconic man who would always sit in the lunchroom reading his Greek paper with comments that would follow as "good on ya mate".

Harry is a treasure to the Metro community his service of 54 years to the Victorian Railways has been an adventure, and we wish him well on his retirement.



Joe Dennis

Organiser

AROUND THE TRAPS

Track Rosters

This month V/Line have begun consultation on the long-awaited track rosters. Over the past several months these rosters have caused much confusion for Members. Several workgroups have already consulted and agreed to rosters before formal consultation and are now having to start the process all over again.

Last week a formal vote was put forward to all track workgroups. Most rosters were rejected, and work groups are submitting their own rosters to V/Line to consider. If the rosters are rejected by V/Line, the work groups will get another opportunity at a roster prior to the final vote.

Projects

In the project area, several large infrastructure works are about to commence. The Gippsland line upgrade, Warrnambool line upgrade part 2 and the Bendigo works near Rochester. Shepparton has also just commenced and is now in full swing. I have been visiting these sites over the last few weeks and will continue to in the future. If any safe worker wishes to call me to discuss any issues they are having on site, please don't hesitate.

I recently attended Wychitella to speak with the V/Line projects gangs. They will be moving from Projects and will now be under the Asset area. Rumours have been coming thick and fast in recent months, from redundancies to being redeployed. I have discussed this at length with V/Line and have been assured that it is a structural change and will only be a different line of reporting, and there will be no job losses.

If you have any questions about any of these or any other issues please call me to discuss
0403 863 869.

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