

# RTBU EXPRESS



The Official Newsletter of the Rail Divisions of the RTBU Victorian Branch  
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**Vik Sharma**

State Secretary

## V/LINE OPERATIONS MEMBERS ENDORSE INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Your RTBU bargaining team has continued to meet with V/Line to continue pushing our critical claims for the V/Line Rail Operations Enterprise Agreement.

V/Line have continued to refuse claims that would deliver job security, wage security and clauses that ensure a fair process for all.

Voting for industrial action delivered strong results showing that around 93% of members who voted have voted for ACTION.

This sends a **STRONG** and **UNITED** message to V/Line that we are not going to accept anything less than RTBU members deserve, and we **WILL** take action to get it.

ALL our critical claims are crucial to the future of our industry:

- **Grievance Clause** = Fairness treatment for all addressing V/Lines anti worker processes.
- **No Forced Redundancies** = Job security that V/Line cannot make employees forcibly redundant as technology and other unforeseen changes hit the network.
- **Classification Structure** = Job and wage security that means any change will happen on your terms, not how and when management choose.
- **Part-Time Clause** = Overtime fairness and wage security, bringing conditions in line with full-timers.
- **36 hour Week** = Additional EDOs/RDOs with no loss of pay.

Members at Metro won conditions that address the same concerns, yet V/Line think you don't deserve what Metro has.

The RTBU's Members and Delegates ran a strong industrial campaign and got results! If V/Line don't want to come to an agreement, **WE WILL TAKE ACTION!**

The next Rail Divisions V/Line EA meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 6 December.

Heading into Christmas, summer holidays and the upcoming major events, now is time to stand together with a united front to ensure we deliver the results all members deserve.

**Vik Sharma**

Victorian Branch Secretary



**RTBU**  
The power of Union

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**Bryan Evans**

Organiser

# INDUSTRY BARGAINING FOR CHANGE

## Results matter, so let's keep our eyes on the prize

At the commencement of this bargaining round the RTBU launched an ambitious campaign to address unparalleled change in our industry.

Major changes are due to affect all aspects of the network. From operations, infrastructure and rollingstock maintenance, manufacturing and projects, initiatives like the Metro Tunnel, Suburban Rail Loop, Airport Rail, Inland Rail, HCMT, X'Trapolis 2.0, the retirement of the classic fleet and Comeng, Next Generation Trams. New tram maintenance facilities and new franchises on the horizon for Metro and Yarra Trams means new skills, and old skills becoming obsolete.

We must be on the front foot to address challenges on our terms, not those of management and an industry wide approach is the only way to deliver these outcomes.

Our strategy must not only focus on the financial aspects of wages and conditions, but also the protections that our EAs offer to members. These come in the form of rostering provisions, dispute rights, redundancy rights and additional time off. These claims are absolutely critical to ensure members are thoroughly protected throughout periods of unprecedented change.

As we approach the halfway mark of the major bargaining round this unified approach is setting new standards for all industry EAs. Let's take stock of the progress already achieved:

## Metro Operations

Now in its final stages of drafting and on-track to go to a vote soon, the in-principle agreement delivers:

- 17% pay increase over 4 years
- No Forced Redundancies
- An additional 5 days off a year by the end of the agreement
- A secure classification structure to cater for future change
- Better wage security for part time members
- Grievance clause allowing fair treatment for all members
- Medical redeployment clause
- Many more general improvements with no loss of conditions

## Metro Infrastructure

This agreement is also in the final stages of drafting and will soon be ready for the vote. It continues to build on the successes of the last two enterprise agreements with:

- Penalty payments for working in inclement weather
- Better penalties for working in public holidays
- Job security by ensuring all contractors engaged are no worse off than full-timers, now extended to projects and also provides wage security to all RTBU labour hire members

## Metro Rolling Stock

At the time of writing Metro rolling stock is on a precipice of swift resolution or industrial action, Although the financial outcomes negotiated so far are solid:

- Once again achieving the 17% increase
- Improved all-purpose allowances
- Paid income protection
- Inclement weather



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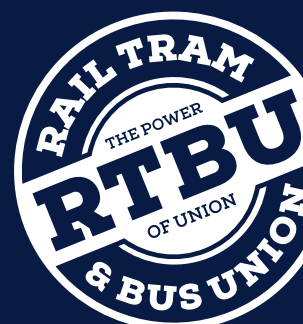
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**Industrial Officer**  
Amanda Swayn  
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Organiser**  
Sally van Bragt  
David Paton





The company to date, have refused to provide quality skills to RTBU members, and are yet to agree to our claim of no forced redundancies. With Comeng retirement barrelling down the line, RTBU members will not settle without these issues being addressed.

### **V/Line Operations**

With industrial action now endorsed by members, the intensity of bargaining is really heating up. While the RTBU expects V/Line to deliver industry standard protections and improvements won in Metro Operations, management claims to be having an “existential crisis” over our core claims.

V/Line who have repeatedly failed to deliver fair outcomes and have inconsistently applied their processes causing significant industrial disputation, are pushing back hardest on claims that would require the company to follow fair process.

Although progress is being made on some items, V/Line are pushing back on the items that matter most including the grievance clause, no forced redundancies and the 36 hour week.

### **V/Line Infrastructure**

This agreement is unique this bargaining round with management entertaining some non-financial claims but are failing to keep wages in-line with other infrastructure companies. V/Line continues to blame the Government Wages Policy but fail to recognise the impact on their workforce and staff retention in a world of rampant inflation and cost of living pressures.

With infrastructure projects still booming, skilled RTBU members are highly skilled and sought after by other companies already paying higher wages – this leaves V/Line vulnerable.

As this would undermine our industry and network and is not an outcome anyone wants to see happen, V/Line and the government must get serious or face the impact of industrial action to force an outcome.

### **V/Line Maintenance (Alstom Rollingstock)**

With Classic fleet retirement and a newly renovated South Dynon Depot on the horizon, the VLM agreement is critical for the future of Rolling Stock across the network. Initially hampered by delays due to the current tender process, progress is now rapidly being

made with the company dropping off on its most aggressive claims. The last offer even acknowledged a competitive wage increase of 17%.

Despite progress, there remain outstanding many claims that would deliver job security and skills to our members. With Classic fleet retirement looming, these claims take precedence over the financial outcomes and members won’t hesitate to take industrial action to back in their job security and skills.

### **Other Agreements**

There are many other agreements receiving significant attention to ensure there are no weak links across the industry. Laing O’Rourke’s new agreement is set to go to a vote, and McConnel Dowell is also about commence.

Many EAs across Labour Hire have recently been finalised or are currently under negotiation. These include Programmed **Skilled Workforce, Galco Group, Corfad and TAG Hire**, to name a few.

Bargaining across industry, with a long-term view that spanning multiple bargaining rounds is the best way to utilise our powers as the industry union.

Touch one, touch all.





**David Paton**

Organiser

## ANNA STEWART MEMORIAL PROJECT

The RTBU has a proud history of supporting women members to better participate in our union.

The Anna Stewart Memorial Project run by Trades Hall is a two-week women's leadership training and development program designed to encourage more women to be active in their unions. Now in its 39th year and 2023 was no exception.

Anna Stewart was a journalist and active Victorian union official who tragically lost her life aged 35.

Women form a critical voice and can influence the culture of a workplace. Within unions and at the workplace, women have the immediate capacity to identify workplace challenges and drive action.

The Anna Stewart Memorial Project is a way forward for women motivated to support others and nurture their voices, provide opportunity, and affect meaningful change.

Women representing nine different unions graduated from this year's cohort after completing 5 days training with Trades Hall and 5 days at their respective unions.

Topics addressed included:

- campaigning and organising skills
- women's leadership and union history
- rights of delegates & health and safety representatives in the workplace
- workplace rights, and
- emerging issues for women at work and more.

Participants benefitted from the experience of other women from diverse industries, unions, and occupations.

2023 RTBU recipients; Whitney Murphy and Kira Scotland exemplify the qualities embodied by Anna Stewart graduates.

Kira and Whitney visited the Footscray Hospital and West Gate Tunnel projects with CFMEU Women's Organiser Lisa Zanatta. They spent an intense week with RTBU Organisers in Stations, Infrastructure and Rolling Stock getting a feel for the issues being faced by members whilst working on a series of projects.

As a collective with other unions, they organised an action at the Queen Victoria Market designed to bring attention to the campaign to abolish non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) which are a tool used by bosses to bind women into silence about gendered violence and sexual harassment at work.

The RTBU congratulates Whitney and Kira for graduating from a program with a long and distinguished list of alumni.



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