

RTBU EXPRESS

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Luba Grigorovitch
State Secretary

THE JOYS OF THE SILLY SEASON

Enjoy your Christmas and please stay safe

It is nearly the end of another year and Christmas parties and work functions will likely be very common. This is, no doubt, a time to relax and enjoy each other's company however it can quickly turn from festive fun into a nightmare with unintended consequences.

As we celebrate the year that is coming to an end, we also encourage you to keep in mind some of the issues that we tend to face when it comes to work functions, social media and keeping drugs and alcohol out of the workplace.

Work functions are still connected to the work place

Work functions can be a great opportunity to relax with workmates but please don't take the opportunity to tell your boss or colleagues what you really think of them. Especially beware of speaking your mind after a few drinks at a work function.

The problem is that workplace policies and codes of conduct will often apply to work functions. In situations involving alcohol it can be easy for misunderstandings to arise or tensions to escalate. This can result in allegations of breaches of standards of behaviour that you may have thought didn't apply at a work function. Unfortunately, if you

are at a work function you may still be subject to disciplinary action.

Social media

The line between work and private lives is being increasingly blurred thanks to social media. We continue to represent members who have been called in by the boss to answer to allegations of misconduct arising from social media activities.

Most companies in the railways have in place a social media policy or work instruction which can extend to action taken even if you are not at work. Members need to be aware of the social media policy or procedure at their workplace. Many of these policies expressly provide that a breach may lead to disciplinary action, which may include termination.

Please be aware of and monitor your online presence, particularly during what is commonly termed the silly season and remember that being under the influence will not get you out of trouble.

Drugs and alcohol in the workplace

The same can be said when it comes to drugs and alcohol in the workplace. These policies and procedures exist not only for your own safety but for the safety of your workmates and the travelling public. There are different factors

which effect how your body deals with alcohol consumption and readings will therefore vary between people. Importantly, you may not feel like you still have alcohol in your system, even though you do. If in doubt, don't take the risk.

Call your manager and inform them that you need the day off if you think something is still in your system.

Drug and alcohol testing in the workplace is not limited to post incident testing. Random testing is common practice across many worksites and members should familiarise themselves with the specific procedures in place at your own worksite.

If you have any questions or are called to attend a meeting due to allegations of breaching the code of conduct policy at a work function, social media or drug and alcohol policy or procedures please contact your union Organiser straight away.

Be safe, smart and enjoy the festive season!

Luba Grigorovitch
- State Secretary





Joe Dennis

Organiser

THE VICIOUS CYCLE OF THE PTV CALL CENTRE

You come in to work every day on time for your shift. You do what is asked, no questions. You meet all your targets, you take your allocated meal breaks and are back at work after the allocated time. You have been working this way for many years. BUT when it comes to a toilet break you only have a lousy eight minutes for your entire work day. Yes eight minutes, and Probe (operating the PTV Call Centre) get away with this by calling it "personal time".

Members who have severe medical issues only have eight minutes to use. This issue was addressed with management and I was told this is not the case and members had it wrong. However in the last two weeks I have

received a flood of emails from staff telling me otherwise.

Staff are afraid to take any longer as they are constantly being told that they only have eight minutes "personal time" to use. If they do take longer than this, their managers are alerted of it. Managers are then using the old "duty of care" excuse to go looking for the staff. This is a concern as it is an invasion of privacy.

Management have now formed a "work force management team leader" to monitor this. If a member is late by 30 seconds this "task force" will track the member down and tell them to return to work.

On top of this, while Probe finally agreed to having a union notice board in the workplace, the first thing that was put up on that board was torn down by management. The Delegates at Probe have now been advised that anything that goes up on the union board first needs to be approved by management.

I honestly cannot believe that this type of work place is still around in 2018. Members continue to come to work under these conditions and I applaud each and every one of them for putting up with this every day. We will continue to fight to improve the conditions for staff in 2019, and with their EA up for negotiation it will make for some interesting times ahead.



RTBU WOMEN GOLD COIN DONATION MORNING TEA

Thank you to everyone who attended the annual RTBU Women Gold Coin Donation Morning Tea on Wednesday 21 November.

The Melbourne Period Project was the charity of choice for the morning tea this year and we had the pleasure of having Donna from MPP come and speak to us about the work that they do.

For further information about the MPP, you can visit their website: <http://www.theperiodproject.org.au/melbourne/>

You can also follow their Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/PeriodProjectMelbourne/> to find out more information about events and when they need volunteers.

The money that was raised on the day has been donated to the Melbourne Period Project along with an extremely generous box of sanitary items which was collected on the day.



DELEGATES MEETING DATES – DECEMBER 2018

- **4 December:** MMAOs – A & C
Delegates – 1100-1200hrs
- **5 December:** V/Line Centrol –
1130-1230hrs
- **5 December:** Hawthorn AOs
– A & B Delegates – 1200-1300hrs
- **5 December:** Malvern AOs – A & B
Delegates – 1000-1100hrs
- **6 December:** V/Line Shunters
Southern Cross – 1100-1200hrs
- **7 December:** V/Line North East –
1100-1300hrs
- **10 December:** V/Line Eastern –
1000-1100hrs
- **12 December:** Metro Clifton Hill –
1000-1100hrs
- **19 December:** Metro Northern –
1100-1200hrs
- **20 December:** Metro Burnley –
1100-200hrs
- **20 December:** V/Line Southern
Cross – 1000-100hrs



Joe Maisano
Organiser

AROUND THE TRAPS

As you are reading this article Metro is forcing fatigue rostering into the Signalling grade. Signallers have refused Metro's draft proposed rosters and drafted their own proposed rosters which meet all compliance in terms of good faith bargaining, however Metro have refused and are ramming in the 8/6 roster rotation.

This is extremely concerning given that the work group have formally declined the 8/6 rostering however the lead manager of the Signalling department seems to have his own agenda and continues to force this roster in against the wishes of the work group.

If Metro decide to insist on their proposal, the RTBU will take this matter further to ensure our members are not required to work these fatigued rosters.

Another ongoing dispute in the Signalling grade is the Train Service Officer roles. Metro are implementing yet another level of management

named Signalling Duty Managers at an additional cost. Again, not in good faith bargaining. This is now in formal dispute and we are going through the formalities and will hold Metro to account to keep their promise which was made in a meeting with the General Manager of Operations.

V/Line management is utilising Conductors on available shifts to do customer service duties at Southern Cross Station and in regional areas. A number of meetings have occurred around this and V/Line have promised that a letter would be sent to the RTBU regarding the agreed outcomes from the meetings where Delegate and officials were present at each meeting. Currently I have not received the letter promised. I extended the deadline for this, however still have not received a letter so I am now left with no choice but to put in a formal dispute regarding this messed up process that V/Line have created.

As we say, game on!



Bryan Evans
Organiser

RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE BOOM

It's raining gold in rail. Projects are falling out of the sky, we have the Metro Tunnel, Airport link, Ballarat duplication, proposed electrification to Wallan, and the suburban rail loop on the cards and only 29 of the now 75 grade separations completed. It appears that our industry has a lot to look forward to. All these initiatives are great for our industry with much needed investment after decades of stagnation. But I can't help but ask the question, who will do the work?

The Victorian rail industry has traditionally expanded and contracted very slowly and there is a definitive finite number of members who have the skills to deliver these projects. These skills have been developed over decades of working in the industry, often through sheer experience.

You don't have to look further than the Murray Basin project to see what happens when you

undertake a project with no clue as to what you are doing. A company with minimal rail experience entering into a joint venture with a company with less rail experience was never going to end well. Employing a largely fly in fly out Labour Hire based workforce who didn't have the competencies initially to as much as work on the regional network, on downright dangerous rosters, delivering a dead set shambles of a project that doesn't achieve what it set out to achieve in the first place, blowing out initial costs, and ultimately wasting tax payers money. Not a lot of upside to that.

Experience is a dear teacher someone important once said and the Murray Basin project should teach the State Government and the operators a valuable lesson. In order to deliver these projects in the manner they were intended and have a positive effect on the network and make good use of tax payer money,

there must be a plan.

For one, tendering panels need to look past price, a big factor in the Basin debacle, but more importantly there needs to be co-operation between contractors and if needed, intervention by the State Government to ensure continuity between projects. Giving members the opportunity to go from job to job developing their skills to be a much needed asset to the industry as the network expands is crucial.

If this means a project must be delayed in order to maintain continuity, surely that is a small price to pay to deliver a project that actually works, and skills that will serve the industry for decades to come.

Safety matters. Everyone deserves to return home safe.



Hannah Scott

Member Support Officer

SANITARY VENDING MACHINES

For some time now, women have raised concern around there being no access to sanitary items when they are out and about working in the rail and tram industries. In September at the monthly RTBU Women meeting this concern was formalised and the women urged the RTBU to write to the companies pushing for change.

As I'm sure everyone can appreciate, a woman's time of the month doesn't often come when expected. It can be quick and it can occur when you least expect it, and lets be honest, all of us women have been there at some point or another in life. So what can we do to help this?

RTBU women decided that a solution moving forward would be to have sanitary vending machines installed in all bathrooms across the rail and tram networks. If you're not sure what these are, next time you're in a shopping center or a general public bathroom look around on the walls. Chances are that there is a sanitary vending machine on the wall where you can purchase sanitary items for a small fee.

In many cases, companies will even provide these vending machines at no cost to the customer as they then reap the benefits through the profits of sales in the machines.

Having sanitary items made available through

the vending machines in all bathrooms would save many women from doing the awkward dash to the closest service station or supermarket to purchase her sanitary items.

Imagine you are an Authorised Officer in a crew of four, three of them being men. Would you feel comfortable telling them that you need to run across to the nearest shop to buy sanitary items?

Or you're a Tram Driver who has gone to the bathroom during the quick changeover between driving a tram only to discover that the time of the month has come early. Would you feel comfortable holding up a tram full of passengers so that you can run to the nearest shop to buy sanitary items?

I sure wouldn't and I doubt many people would. It is an issue that is taboo and one that not many people speak about, however it affects women every single day.

Last month Branch Secretary Luba Grigorovitch wrote a letter to each of the CEOs of our major operators (V/Line, Yarra Trams and Metro) to request that they explore the options of installing sanitary vending machines in all bathrooms and toilets across the network.

I am pleased to report that Yarra Trams are looking into options for this, however

unfortunately Metro have denied to even explore it.

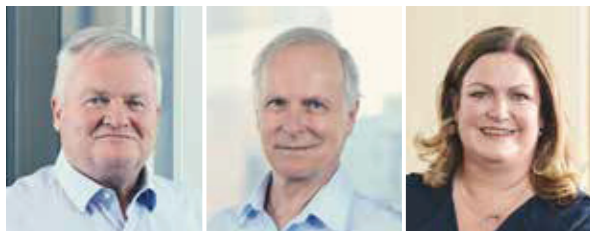
Metro advised that they do not agree that installing sanitary vending machines is and I quote "an appropriate solution at this time" however they do believe that the provision of "a sanitary item within our first aid kits at relevant locations, as a trial... would be a suitable action."

I am completely appalled that a company can think that putting sanitary items in some first aid kits at some locations is a viable solution. Last time I checked, first aid kits were used to treat an injury or illness, so since when did a woman's period become an injury?

To expect women to go to their Station Master, manager or fellow colleague to get access to the first aid kit in the hope that a sanitary item may be available is disgraceful. I can only hope that Metro will realise how unreasonable this is and will reconsider their position.

V/Line have yet to respond to the letter and we will update the RTBU Women's Committee in due course.

We will not let this go. These companies claim to want to be equal for all employees and an attractive employer for both men and women. Well if that is the case, here lies the perfect step in the right direction.



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