

RTBU EXPRESS

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

State Secretary

METRO OPERATIONS EA UPDATE

As most of you would know, the RTBU was in the Federal Court on 14, 15 and 16 October, fighting for our members' right to take protected industrial action.

After three full days of hearing, the union's Federal Court case against Metro has not yet concluded and we will be required back in Court on 6 November 2019.

All we want is a fair EBA but instead we have spent many hours preparing for this case which has so far involved:

- Hours with lawyers obtaining advice, drafting affidavits and preparing for cross examination.
- Everyone in the office had to deal with legal "discovery" which required us to go through phones, emails and other documents to hand over to Metro's lawyers.
- I was in the witness box for hours upon hours being cross examined by Metro's QC.

All of this could have been avoided if Metro had dropped off on their outrageous attacks on our wages and conditions and agreed to a fair EBA.

We expect a decision will take some time, but we hope it's the right one so that we can put this legal stuff behind us and get back to bargaining on an even keel.

Our fight over this isn't just about wages and conditions. Although that's important, our fight is for the future of our rail network, and the future of our city. Our fight is Melbourne's fight.

Melbourne needs a rail system that's safe, that's reliable, and meets the needs of a growing population. It needs a rail system that's properly staffed, and properly maintained.

Melbourne needs you, and you need to be properly paid, you need security of employment, you need decent working conditions.

Following the court case, the RTBU organised a rally on the steps of Flinders Street Station to band together in solidarity and mount



the pressure on Metro to come back to the bargaining table.

Flinders Street Station was surrounded by a sea of flags and unionists for our rally. I thank each and every one of you who came down and showed your support.

I know we've all been here before, stuck in an EBA battle against Metro, feeling like we're banging our head against a wall. It's frustrating, and we're

all sick and tired of going through the same arguments.

But we can't give up, and we won't give up.

Our union has been fighting for rail workers in this town since 1862. That's 157 years of rail workers standing side by side, staring down the bosses, digging in for their rights.

157 years of staunch, determined, trade unionists backing each other up.

157 years of solidarity.

Throughout this fight, we have received solidarity messages and support from many other unions, state-wide, nationally and even internationally.

The industrial laws are broken, and they need to change, we must continue to fight and stand together against this greedy multi-national corporation!

Luba Grigorovitch
- State Secretary



Delegate Meeting Dates

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1 November – V/Line Western – 1100 to 1200hrs ■ 6 November – Metro NSS/CCTV – 1100 to 1200hrs ■ 8 November – Probe (PTV Call Centre) – 1000 to 1100hrs ■ 12 November – Metro Central – (Flinders St) – 1100 to 1200hrs ■ 12 November – TPH A)s – A & D Delegates – 1200 to 1300hrs ■ 13 November – Hawthorn A)s – C & B Delegates – 1200 to 1300hrs ■ 13 November – Malvern AOs – C & B Delegates z – 1000 to 1100hrs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 13 November – Metro Caulfield – 1100 to 1200hrs ■ 14 November – V/Line Southern Cross – 1000 to 1100hrs ■ 14 November – North Melbourne AOs – B & C Delegates – 1000 to 1100hrs ■ 15 November – V/Line Northern – 1100 to 1200hrs ■ 15 November – V/Line North East – 1100 to 1200hrs ■ 19 November – Wilson Security – 1100 to 1200hrs ■ 20 November – MMAOs – A & C Delegates – 1100 to 1200hrs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 21 November – Metro Burnley – 1100 to 1200hrs ■ 26 November – TfV (Transport for Victoria) – 1400 to 1500hrs ■ 27 November – V/Line Central – 1100 to 1200hrs ■ 27 November – V/Line Shunters – Southern Cross – 1100 to 1200hrs ■ 28 November – Metrol, Timetables, Rosters & Signallers – 1000 ■ 29 November – V/Line South West – 1000 to 1100hrs |
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November 2019



Alice Dunn
Industrial Officer

PARENTAL LEAVE AND V/LINE EA BARGAINING UPDATE

I wanted to write to you all on a somewhat personal note following my return to work from parental leave. My baby daughter, Maeve, is now 5 months old and I am totally in love. I have felt very privileged to work in the union movement, however, she has given me a different perspective on its importance, and I want to share some of my reflections in this article.

I returned to work in early September and there has been an incredible energy in the office as RTBU Officials galvanise in the fight against Metro. As I write this article, Luba, Bryan, Joe and Hannah have just left to attend the Federal Court. I am apprehensive about our chances as the legislative framework is really off-kilter but it's so important to put these cases before the courts. At the very least it's part of the process of exposing bad laws.

Meanwhile, I've been charged with looking after bargaining for a new enterprise agreement for V/Line Operations. I am pleased to report that bargaining is progressing well, although some claims that I view as "no brainers" are receiving a strange amount of resistance from V/Line. A case in point is a clause we have proposed ensuring that our members are properly consulted where there is a change their permanent rosters.

On the other hand, V/Line appears to be giving our claim about parental leave the serious consideration it deserves. I firmly believe that changes in this area have the potential to improve the Rail Industry as a whole.

Since I started work at the RTBU I have had a steady trickle of enquiries from men asking why



they only have an entitlement of 1-week partner leave. Currently enterprise agreements for both V/Line and Metro include entitlements of 12 weeks maternity leave, however, this is restricted to women who have given birth. Even if a male is the primary carer, he cannot access the maternity leave entitlement.

I did some research and discovered that the provisions had been deliberately written that way because they were intended to support a woman for the physical aspects of pregnancy and childbirth. However, having just been through the process I find it very difficult to imagine how I would have managed without my partner, Dan, home to help me. It was also very important to him that he have time to bond with Maeve.

One week is certainly not adequate and the more I think about it, the more I think there is a strong case for reform to ensure that parental leave is available regardless of gender and that partners

are able to access more leave. As a society, we have made a lot of important progress improving the workplace for women, but we haven't considered what happens to men when they become fathers.

Based on my own personal experience, I firmly believe that progress in leave benefits for partners will benefit both men and women. As many men do, my partner, Dan, took a combination of partner leave and annual leave around Maeve's birth. We also arranged that he be the primary carer when she was 4 months old and so I have come back at work. This is wonderful for both of us and gives us a lot of insight into each other's perspectives on parenthood. He understands the challenges of being home with an infant and I understand the exhaustion of functioning at work while having had a broken nights' sleep.

I want to make it very clear that there are many important issues being discussed at the bargaining table. It has not been my intention to suggest that this is the most important one, it's just an issue that I have been thinking about recently.

Community expectations are changing, and men shouldn't have to miss out on family.

V/Line should seriously consider our claim. They have an opportunity to be leaders for reform both in Government employment and the Rail Industry. They would also benefit from decreased turn over in staff reducing the costs of recruitment as well as more productive employees.

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