

# RTBU EXPRESS

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

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**Luba Grigorovitch**

State Secretary

## RAILWAY IN CRISIS

In the space of a week, Metro has managed to serve commuters with a complete network paralysis and a derailed train. While RTBU members were left to pick up the pieces, these incidents just scrape the surface of Metro's shortcomings.

With the future of MR4 to be announced in the coming weeks, the timing of these failures will be fresh in the minds of Victorians. While a current ad campaign blames delays and cancellations on upgrade works, RTBU members know the underlying truth about the state of Melbourne's train network.

As members are aware, during the PM Peak on Thursday 13 July a hardware issue brought down the entire network. With thousands of passengers left stranded and many RTBU members put under pressure to either resolve the issue or manage customer dissatisfaction.

It has since come to light that in this incident the backup system went down along with the main system, leaving Melbourne with no further line of defence. But that's not all. At the time of this debacle, Metro had failed to have adequate staff at disaster recovery site to enable trains to continue running.

While Metro has been focused on targeting members for taking their sick leave entitlements and applying pressure in other ways, they have been caught with their pants down having failed to adequately staff critical signaling and train control positions.

A rigorous, well implemented system with ample staff would not leave the city in limbo.

This follows years of negligent understaffing that continues to put Melbourne at risk as minimum operational staffing relies heavily on the goodwill of members to work fatiguing overtime hours.

To put this in perspective, if members did not routinely agree to overtime, Melbourne's trains would not run.

On the maintenance side of safe and reliable service delivery, Monday's derailment reaffirms the concerns continuously raised by the RTBU. The government must conduct a rigorous audit of state assets and fault management procedures prior to any new contract being awarded.

Scrambling to cover up their failures, Metro have denied all allegations that infrastructure maintenance has been the cause of this derailment. However they still can't tell us what the cause is a week later.

The area where Monday's derailment occurred was in close proximity to Points 207 at the convergence of Roads 3 and 4 in the Lilydale yard. This set of points has been booked out of service in the Weekly Operational Notice for some time and faults with the track condition in the region have been logged for several years.

In fact, Metro's records show that the entire yard needed renewal in 2016. While Metro claims that the points themselves were booked back into service last week, these full works still require completion.

As a private operator, it is clear that Metro's first priority is the service of shareholders before any concern for employees and ticket holders. Keeping the lucrative contract for the Melbourne metropolitan passenger train network is key to continuing their business model of creaming taxpayers money.

Every time another article is published, every time there is a radio interview or a news segment, I get more calls from more members telling me of their experiences, sending in evidence, encouraging their workplace issues to be exposed.

The truth is that RTBU members bare the brunt of commuter dissatisfaction, stress, pressure and fatigue at the fault of poor management and it is high time their poor practice is exposed to the public. Workers deserve better, commuters deserve better and for better railways we fight!

**Luba Grigorovitch**

- State Secretary





**Cathy Birch**

Organiser

## AROUND THE TRAPS

In my first weeks at the RTBU I have attended Delegates meetings across many areas such as stations, Authorised Officers, V/Line Control and Metrol, Timetables, Rosters and Signallers. These meetings prove to be extremely valuable in rectifying many issues that are raised by Delegates and members.

I am currently running Delegate and Women's Advocate elections across many areas. These include V/Line Cars Office, Parliament Station, Box Hill Station, Hurstbridge Line and South Morang Line. It has been great to get out to the network to arrange these elections, and I look forward to meeting the new Delegates and Women's Advocates.

I have attended conciliations and disciplinarys and have heard many members' reports about bullying and harassment in the workplace. Among this, I have also attended an independent investigation into bullying at work on one of our sites. I am currently dealing with a case where a member has been working in a role in which he didn't apply for. This member has been performing this role for over a year, and I am fighting to get him back to the job he was appointed to.

We are also currently running a signal box audit where the often overlooked signalling staff who keep trains running, mitigate delays when there are issues and keep workers safe on the tracks

when doing maintenance work. Many of these signal boxes are very old and leave a lot to be desired in terms of comfort and amenities.

Through this signal box audit, we hope to uncover a lot of the health and safety risks that many signal boxes pose.

This is what the union is for. To stand up and address issues, to protect workers' rights and conditions, to call out and put a stop to bullying and harassment!



**Joe Maisano**

Organiser

## NIGHT NETWORK STAFF – GUARANTEED PERMANENT POSITIONS

A few months ago, the Victorian Government announced the permanent extension of Night Network. This is a great outcome for the RTBU and members because it means more permanent jobs.

While it was announced that Night Network would become permanent, Metro Trains refused to put Night Network staff on permanent contracts, and instead left them on fixed term contracts until 1 December 2017.

From day one, RTBU Delegates, officials and members maintained the view that all Night Network staff should be made permanent.

Prior to the announcement, the RTBU had been continuing with difficult negotiations and were able to reach the agreement that if the trial was not extended, the fixed term employees would remain employed until 1 December 2017. The RTBU however continued to push for permanent positions, by filling vacancies and finding these employees work on the stations until another opportunity presented itself. We pushed strongly for this because I do believe that once they were let go, many would not return to the railways.

After many months of negotiations, the RTBU received in writing from Metro a commitment

that all Night Network staff will receive offers of permanent employment by the end of July 2017. This is a great win for the RTBU and all Night Network employees who will now be offered permanent positions!

If you are a Night Network staff member and you want your employment with Metro to cease on 1 December, please contact me on 0421 122 437.

Congratulations to all involved with an outstanding outcome for the stations operations group.

**Freedom in a home loan isn't hard to find.**

**For an appointment contact Doris Brunetti on 0439 353 267.**

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**Darren Galea**

Organiser

## AO ROSTER CHANGES

With the permanent extension of Night Network, the Authorised Officers continue to get more and more fatigued.

Since the beginning of the Night Network trial, the Authorised Officers are the only department in Rail that have yet to receive extra staff to cover the extra hours required of Night Network. This has caused a tremendous amount of fatigue which has resulted in members needing to utilise leave entitlements to avoid serious exhaustion.

The RTBU has put pressure on Metro on a number of occasions to re-develop a more suitable roster to address the fatigue issues, which will therefore allow members to spend more time at home with their families.

While this is the end goal, the RTBU is still currently in negotiation with Metro around what these rosters will look like. Once the rosters are developed, RTBU Delegates and HSRs from all depots will go through consultation before it is communicated with the membership for a vote.



**Hannah Scott**

Member Support Officer

## RTBU WOMEN UPDATE

RTBU Women meetings continue to occur across the network, with our July meeting happening at Williams Landing Station.

In attendance were women from across different areas of rail such as stations, AOs and Conductors. The meeting was a great success, with discussion around many issues such as safety, uniforms for winter, assaults across the network and sufficient facilities to keep warm in winter.

These are all large issues which not only women, but all RTBU members face, and we hope to find remedies for them all.

Also included in the agenda was an update on the Women's Advocates, where we currently have three new elections open for the Hurstbridge Line, South Morang Line and Central Stations. It is great to see such a large interest in the Women's Advocate position, and we look forward to growing that role even further throughout the year.

Voting is currently open for the position of RTBU Women's Officer. There are six nominees, ranging from Authorised Officers, Station Staff and a Tram Driver.

All female RTBU members have one vote and can vote for whichever nominee she chooses. Voting is accepted in writing via email only to [women@rtbuvic.com.au](mailto:women@rtbuvic.com.au) and will close at 12pm Wednesday 9 August 2017.

Good luck to all the nominees, and I look forward to welcoming our new RTBU Women's Officer.

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[rtbuvic.com.au](http://rtbuvic.com.au) | (03) 8630 9100

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



## Delegates Meeting Dates – August 2017

- 1 August – **Metro Malvern AOs B & C Delegates** – 1000 – 1100hrs
- 1 August – **Metro Hawthorn AOs B & C Delegates** – 1200 – 1300hrs
- 2 August – **V/Line Control** – 1130 – 1230hrs
- 2 August – **Metro NSS / CCTV** – 1100 – 1200hrs
- 2 August – **Metro Northern** – 1100 – 1200hrs
- 4 August – **V/Line Western** – 1100 – 1200hrs
- 8 August – **Metro Central** – Melbourne Central – 1100 – 1200hrs
- 9 August – **Metro Caulfield** – 1100 – 1200hrs
- 15 August – **V/Line Southern Cross** – 1100 – 1200hrs
- 16 August – **Metro Burnley** – 1100 – 1200hrs
- 16 August – **MMAOs A & C Delegates** – 1100 – 1200hrs
- 17 August – **V/Line Shunters - Southern Cross** – 1100 – 1200hrs
- 22 August – **Metro North Melbourne AOs A & B Delegates** – 1000 – 1100hrs
- 22 August – **Metro TPH AOs A & B Delegates** – 1200 – 1300hrs
- 23 August – **Metro Clifton Hill** – 1100 – 1200hrs
- 24 August – **Drivers Allocation** – 1330 – 1500hrs
- 25 August – **V/Line North East** – 1100 – 1200hrs
- 30 August – **Pacific National MFT** – 1500 – 1600hrs
- 30 August – **Metro Northern** – 1100 – 1200hrs
- 31 August – **Metrol, Timetables, Rosters & Signallers** – 1000 – 1200hrs

**Hoodies**

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### Contact us

**rtbuvic.com.au**  
**(03) 8630 9100**

Level 2, 365 Queen Street,  
Melbourne, VIC 3000

**E** rtbu@rtbuvic.com.au  
**F** 03 8630 9122

**State Secretary**  
Luba Grigorovitch

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**Admin & Salaried Division**  
Secretary: Steven Kozmevski

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**Rail Operations /  
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Organiser: Joe Maisano

