

# RTBU EXPRESS

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

## WHEN DEMAND IS HIGH

It is no secret that our industry is currently booming with rail projects. These projects have created an unprecedented demand for Signals & Communications (S&C) qualifications in Victoria and placed huge strain on regional S&C resources as members consider work on projects with higher wages.

As more projects have been announced in Victoria and pressures have increased on the workforce doing the heavy lifting, the RTBU approached V/Line to negotiate a deal that would work better for our industry and our members.

For the past several months the RTBU has been negotiating on behalf of V/Line S&C members for a parity deal with Metro. The objective of these negotiations was to ensure RTBU S&C members did not chase high earning project work at the expense of high quality, critical and secure, long term work with V/Line.

The final proposal endorsed by RTBU members delivers skills, security, stability and future capability for the industry, our members and V/Line's operations.

The key points include:

- Equal pay for equal work. V/Line S&C members to be paid the same pay rate as their counterparts on the same classification at Metro Trains.
- All overtime double time
- Annual leave paid as per roster
- Off roster public holidays
- 12 new apprentices
- 8 days on, 6 days off roster – as in MTM Track

Organiser Bryan Evans recently completed a roadshow of S&C depots where these issues have been widely discussed. Members have spoken loud and clear, voting unanimously to endorse the **RTBU's proposal**.

Despite initially agreeing to the intent of the RTBU's claims, V/Line's version has fallen short of what is required. As V/Line's proposal removes several conditions from the package endorsed by RTBU members, V/Line must reconsider the value of their highly skilled and experienced workforce.

RTBU members are determined to secure an outcome that ensures the long term capability of our network. Without this important reform V/Line stands to lose their capacity to effectively perform S&C work into the future.

**Luba Grigorovitch**  
- State Secretary





**Cathy Birch**

Organiser

## METRO SIGNAL BOX AUDIT

Since starting at the RTBU, I have conducted a signal box audit, which involved visits to every signal box in the Metro network. There are many issues being raised by signallers, which are being addressed by RTBU Delegates at the signalling department monthly meetings.

The matters raised during the audit included issues of safety, comfort and Enterprise Agreement compliance.

Some of these issues are;

- Getting women's trousers onto the uniform order form. This was a win for the female signallers in my first month at the RTBU.
- Signallers have started being trained in the new Safety Critical Communication Standard Operating Procedure which was brought into effect in January 2017.

- Vacancies in the Signalling grade is a major concern.

- The signalling department is short staffed and too often members who go off sick can't be replaced and the signallers on the shifts before and after are then expected to work twelve hours.

- Signallers routinely work 12 shifts per fortnight. I am in the process of writing to Management about this as it needs to be rectified.

- Printing safe working circulars is problematic when printers are so old, broken or temperamental and are no longer supported by IT. I am currently in discussions with Management and will continue to report as progress is made.

- I have also discovered via the Signal Box audit that Signallers at several locations have no basin in the toilet area and major building faults. This is not good enough. I have reported this to Management and to date nothing has been done therefore I have raised it with Luba Grigorovitch to escalate this major issue with PTV.

These are just some of the issues that were raised during the audit, and the RTBU along with Delegates are taking steps forward to resolve and address these issues as soon as possible.

If you are a signaller and were not present when I visited your signal box, feel free to give me a call on 0403 863 869 or send me an email at [cathy.birch@rtbuvic.com.au](mailto:cathy.birch@rtbuvic.com.au) to raise any issues that you believe need to be resolved.



**Darren Galea**

Organiser

## V/LINE SHUNTERS & YARD MASTERS

For some time now, the Shunters at V/Line Southern Cross (SC) have been facing a number of issues stemming from the Latrobe Street Bridge. Issues include commuters throwing objects over the bridge as well as a number of fatalities that have been occurring for far too long.

Shunters at SC are constantly facing difficulties when shunting a train. While the shunter needs to concentrate on the shunt, they are continuously looking up in fear of being injured from foreign objects being thrown from above the bridge.

Back in March this year, I attempted to resolve this issue by sending a letter to the respective people at Melbourne City Council and V/Line, however to date, no measures have been put in place to rectify these issues.

In the meantime, I have also had many meetings with local management to come up with some solutions, however thus far, none of these have progressed.

Along with this, there are a number of other local issues that we are working through with the help of our monthly Delegates meetings at both Geelong and Southern Cross.

Some of the things currently in discussion include roster changes, new kitchen facilities and additional shunters which is a great win meaning more members and a better workload for the current shunters.

Recently we have also elected three new positions in this area, including two Delegates, Jason Oliver for the Shunters, Aaron Cutting for the Yard Masters and Tim Ashcroft as the HSR for the whole work group.



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Luba Grigorovitch

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