



Vik Sharma
Branch Secretary

WOMEN MAKE THE UNION STRONG

International Women's Day this year saw Trades Hall championing the theme of Safe, Respected and Equal. I was very proud to be a part of the RTBU contingent at the rally.

International Women's Day Rally has a long history of celebrating women's achievements and highlighting the current campaigns of the movement in the fight for equality for all. This couldn't be more relevant to an industry like ours.

This year, Trades Hall kicked off the campaign to end sexual harassment at work and ban non-disclosure agreements (NDAs). NDAs are commonly used by bosses to settle individual matters by stopping members and the union from being able to speak out publicly about the matter at hand.

This often means members are unable to speak openly and plainly about their experience, or draw broader public awareness to how an issue has been dealt with.

To ensure that the voices of survivors are heard, and that perpetrators are held to account unions are calling on the State Government to legislate restrictions on the use of non-disclosure agreements to ensure workers are empowered to speak out without fear of retribution or reprisal.

The RTBU has a long and proud history of achieving wins for women in a male dominated workforce from basic needs like toilets, to domestic violence leave and the gendered violence clause in all major enterprise agreements.

It is crucial to recognise that the fight for women's rights is not solely a women's issue, but a universal one. Unless we protect our most vulnerable, lowest paid or least protected, it is difficult to achieve improvements across the board. Solidarity on common equality is our strength!

As history tells us, pay equality, the superannuation gap, parental rights, flexible work arrangements and better work life balance stands to benefit not just women, but all workers. We must stop employers' attempts to divide and conquer or pay lower than the rightful entitlements based on gender to advance the standing of all rail and public transport workers.

RTBU Women Fight & Win

For women working in a male dominated industry, many feel as though they must work twice as hard to have their voices heard.

The RTBU Women's committee was set up 13 years ago to encourage women to become more active in their union, discuss women's issues openly and frankly, and press forward on addressing issues that remain unresolved by employers to this day.

To inspire more involvement, an annual Women's Conference is held to celebrate the achievements of women in our industry and plan for the future.

This conference will be an opportunity to network with other Members, share experiences, and develop activists' skills.

All RTBU members are invited to join the annual Women's Conference, to be held on the 13 April 2023.

RSVP is essential to secure your spot. If you are interested in attending, please speak to your supervisor to organise your release. Should you encounter any issues, please contact us at women@rtbuvic.com.au.



Vik Sharma
Victorian Branch Secretary





Darren Galea

Secretary Rail Operations Division

SAFETY IS ALWAYS ON THE AGENDA

Safety at work continues to be a key priority of the RTBU.

We have met with stakeholders regarding strengthening safety measures against assaults, better using data and increasing public awareness through advertising campaigns.

As Delegates, HSRs, and Members we must maintain the pressure on companies to provide meaningful data on assaults across the network, to not only listen but consult thoroughly with Members to implement concrete solutions.

A big part of this is reporting. Members must make sure they report all incidents, no matter how big or small. This enables all involved to access the support they need and so that we have accurate data on the prevalence and nature of workplace assaults in our industry.

It cannot be considered "just a part of the role" to go to work and face abuse. As a union, we must

use our collective voice to ensure that employers uphold their duty of care to provide a safe workplace for all frontline workers who keep the network running every day.

There is a long road ahead as we look to overhauling companies' attitudes and responses towards assaults on the network. However, just as the RTBU Members of the past have paved the way for the conditions we have today, we will keep up the fight for an industry where no one has to feel unsafe and unsupported at work.

Over the last few years, we have engaged with OH&S reps to be part of the safety campaign, ensuring that Members are consulted and represented every step of the way. HSRs have been integral to our wins so far, such as successfully lobbying Metro to properly staff stations, resisting their attempts to drive profits at the expense of the safety of all frontline workers.

The RTBU will continue to provide training for HSRs, giving them the skills to lead the fight as advocates for the physical and psychological health and safety of their fellow workers. Please reach out to your Organiser or contact the RTBU office if you are interested in becoming more active and involved in your union.

Put your hand up when HSR, Delegate and Women's Advocate elections are being held for your workgroup, encourage fellow members to put their hands up and contribute your ideas and passion to this campaign and so many more. To simply find out more about how you can be more involved, contact the union office or your organiser today.

The more Members we have who put their hand up, the more strength we have as a union to fight this battle, and any future battles we may face!



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
Vik Sharma

Infrastructure Division
Secretary: Jon Saw

Admin & Salaried Division
Secretary: Steven Kozmevski

Rail Operations Division
Secretary: Darren Galea

Workshops Division
Secretary: Paul Jumpertz

**Infrastructure, Workshops
& Labour Hire**
Organiser: Bryan Evans
Organiser: Joe Dennis

Industrial Officer
Amanda Swayn

**Operations & Admin
Organiser**
Sally Van Bragt



@rtbuvic



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Joe Dennis

Organiser

THE WILD WEST OF RAIL PROJECTS

2023 has arrived, and I am attending as many rail projects as possible.

So far, most projects seem to be doing the right thing regarding safety.

However, there are still cowboys in the rail industry who treat safety as negotiable and will happily cut corners to save a few bucks.

They usually justify their actions with the statement "nothing has happened yet so nothing is likely to happen."

RTBU Members are calling me to attend their sites and hold these cowboys to account.

The safety of members is always the first priority of this Union and we will continue to make sure you all return home safely.

We need Members, Delegates and Shop Stewards to call out any unsafe practices and notify the union and myself directly.

Members are the eyes and ears of this union. The first line of defence for spotting unsafe practices

and calling them out before someone gets hurt.

We also collaborate with other unions on site to ensure every worker is protected.

Members deserve to have their voices heard on all issues, but especially safety and it is the companies' responsibility to ensure every worker on their site is protected and safe.

You can reach me on 0403 863 869 if you have any questions or want to schedule a prestart or site visit.



Sally Van Bragt

Organiser

AROUND THE TRAPS

2023 is heating up as a huge year for all of us. Enterprise Bargaining is taking place with all the major operators, we are facing changes to ticketing and further changes to the structure of our network.

With a tender process underway for the provision of a new ticketing system it is important members have a voice in the setup and we ensure all members are protected no matter which system is implemented.

With the introduction of the new Regional Fare Caps making travel across the state cheaper and more accessible for thousands of commuters throughout Victoria. Meeting adequate staffing requirements, service provision and job security are major priorities for the months ahead.

Probe members have started a gradual return to the office this year, with staff attending on-site for at least one shift a week. It has been fantastic to get up to the offices and visit with our members working on the PTV campaign. I look

forward to catching up with more of you as the year progresses and more members return.

We're already in full swing. Without you, the members, driving campaigns and working collaboratively with your Organisers none of the progress would be possible. A massive thank you to all members for your support and for working with us over the years and into the future.

Womens Rights At Work

On Tuesday the 14 March, Trades Hall hosted a panel of Union women who hold HSR positions within a variety of Industries as part of the WRAW Festival (Womens Rights At Work).

Metro's Lauren Sheppard (HSR and Delegate) was invited to sit on a panel to discuss why women are reluctant to accept HSR positions and to empower and educate more women to accept these roles and inform them of their rights and powers as an HSR. Lauren said that the opportunity to network and compare notes was a great experience and that she left feeling empowered and supported by both the RTBU and Trades Hall.





David Paton
Organiser

EUGENE ACCORNERO



A huge congratulations to Eugene Accornero who recently celebrated an amazing 50 years working in the Victorian Rail System and as a staunch Union member.

His colleagues and friends celebrated with a well catered morning tea, telling tales (some of them true) from their time on the rails.

He currently works at Metro Trains as a Station Officer at Essendon Station.

Eugene began his career in rail on the 15th of January 1973 as a Junior Station Officer at Flemington Bridge Station on the Upfield line. Throughout his career Eugene has worked as a Train Shunter, has completed his Safe Working, and even acted as Station Master!

Eugene says he enjoys the variety that comes with his work, with no 2 days ever being the same. He loves talking to customers to help them on their journey around Melbourne. He fondly recalls helping one lady find an expensive pair of shoes she lost, ensuring their safe return and the owners gratitude!

Eugene acknowledges that there have been challenges throughout his time in rail. The industry moving from paper-based systems to computer-based systems was a significant adjustment. He recalls the customer confusion when the Kennett Government split the rail system in two, and the extra layer this added to his job.

Eugene says that his time in rail, and with the RTBU has been overwhelmingly positive.

Eugene has been a Union member for as long as he has been in the rail industry, being inducted into the Union very shortly after gaining his employment. He says he appreciates the culture the Union provides, being there for people, helping continue the fight for job security in a constantly changing environment.

We'd like to thank Eugene for his time for this story and the RTBU extends our gratitude for his work now and into the future.

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Contact us

rtbuvic.com.au
(03) 8630 9100

Level 2, 365 Queen Street,
Melbourne, VIC 3000

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