

# RTBU EXPRESS

The Official Newsletter of the Rail Divisions of the RTBU Victorian Branch  
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**Vik Sharma**  
State Secretary

## RTBU CONFERENCE BREAKS ATTENDANCE RECORD AHEAD OF MAJOR BARGAINING

Over 100 Delegates, HSRs and activists attended last week's annual RTBU conference in a show of strength that set another record.

Workplace representatives from across all divisions and job roles within the RTBU met at the grand Victorian Trades Hall, contributing to meaningful discussion on developing an even stronger union presence in your workplace, and how we can work together to deliver rock solid enterprise agreement outcomes.

Throughout the conference we heard from keynote speakers such as our National Secretary Mark Diamond and Minister for Public Transport Ben Carroll.

The minister covered hot topics such as the introduction of a new ticketing system, the metro tunnel and an overview of other technologies and changes on the horizon. To ensure members are supported throughout any change, I will continue to press him on further detail and commitments as matters progress.

Mark Diamond focused on the 30th anniversary of the RTBU and the successes that have been achieved through amalgamation into one big national industry-wide union. He gave examples of how the union has worked nationally to block attempts by the rail regulator to introduce mandatory and audio and video in-cab surveillance of train drivers, and is now using pursuing a review of national rail safety laws. He told how the RTBU is now recognised by governments and major industry stakeholders as

the central source for any policy that might affect rail and public transport workers.

Workshops took place where attendees shared their experiences on the job, building ideas and reporting back collective next steps that can be taken on the job from improved communications, the importance of up-to-date details for all members and further training and knowledge that can assist day-to-day representation on the job.

The conference was followed by an open members event with opportunities to mingle between different workplaces and employers that proved a great success. We were thrilled to see so many people participate in the social side of our union - it is these relationships that make our union strong!

A big congratulations to Diego Esqueria from Metrol who won the Frank Hyett award in recognition for his commitment to building the union on the job, and a massive acknowledgment of members in receipt of plaques recognising 30, 40 and 50 years of membership.

Should members be interested in further details, you are encouraged to contact your delegate or organiser.

**Vik Sharma**  
Victorian Branch Secretary



**RTBU**  
The power of Union

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**Callen Parsons**

Organiser

## INTRODUCING CALLEN PARSONS

**To continue providing improved support for members across the network, the RTBU has employed Callen Parsons to broaden support and proactive capacity to tackle a wide array of issues facing our industry.**

I am very excited to be working here at the RTBU. While I have only been here for a short time, I have immediately felt at home interacting with members and officials. As an experienced Industrial Officer, I feel I can offer a range of skills and abilities to help improve the working lives of RTBU members.

I have been fortunate to have worked across a number of industries in my union career. These

include unions representing the power industry, mining, manufacturing, water, local government, health, finance and the community sector.

While this is my first opportunity to work in the rail industry, I come from good stock as both my grandfathers worked in rail at different stages of their careers.

In many ways, I was born to be an advocate. I empathise with members and seek to understand your needs, always excited to take up the next challenge. I bring compassion to members and a fire in the belly when taking on the employer.

Since arriving at the RTBU, I have been blown away by the calibre of members, delegates and officials. The close-knit team at the RTBU are incredibly committed to the members and work tirelessly to achieve the best possible outcomes. It has been a truly inspiring experience and I look forward to growing as a member of this team.

As my induction is completed and the workload picks up, I look forward to meeting as many members and delegates as possible.

There's plenty going on with bargaining and other campaigns so I look forward to introducing myself personally in the not-too-distant future.



**Joe Dennis**

Organiser

## WHEN RAIN DROPS, WORK STOPS



I've been attending construction projects across the state to conduct safety inspections. This allows me to:

- Inspect any plant, substance or other thing at the workplace.
- Observe work.
- Take photographs or measurements or make sketches or recordings (both audio or video) at the place.
- Talk to workers.
- Talk to the employer about anything relevant to the suspected contravention.

Safety contraventions have been detected at several sites. These have related to issues such as outdated and damaged PPE, fatigue, accreditations/qualifications, access and egress, and general site safety. I will continue these site visits where members raise concerns to check on and uphold the safety of all RTBU members.

Several dispute notices have also been issued recently. These have included notices issued to

Morson relating to breaches of the enterprise agreement where safeworkers were rostered for continuous 12 hour shifts on the 40 day Southern Program Alliance (SPA) shutdown. This is a reminder to check your EA shift provisions and get in contact where necessary.

Coleman/Acciona were also issued a notice of dispute over a lack of consultation on the implementation of a new app designed to log shift sign ons and flag applicable allowances saving paperwork and time. The catch however is that the app asks members to allow tracking while on shift and the company had not allowed members any time to ask questions or understand how or why this app will be used, or how the data will be managed.

2023 marks the end of several EA negotiations in the project/labour hire space with several more under negotiation.

Delegate meetings are now taking place for the V/Line Infrastructure EA to establish a formal log of claims. If any members have anything they wish to add on their EA log of claims, please raise

them with your Delegate for discussion and I will keep you updated as consultation begins around these issues.

Finally, with the cold and wet weather here it is important to remember that the inclement weather clauses in your EAs are there for a reason. These clauses also work in hand in hand with the OHS Act and are there to keep everyone safe.

The RTBU has fought hard over many years to ensure members go home safe. If it is raining, don't work.

Where performing critical works (concrete pour, water/power failures etc) you are to get inclement weather allowance for every hour. Critical does not include works that are running late or need to be done, they are jobs that cannot stop.

Remember "IF RAIN DROPS, WORK STOPS"

If you have any issues relating to safety on site or want to arrange a prestart or site visit please call me on **0403 863 869**.

### Contact us

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Vik Sharma

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