

RTBU EXPRESS



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

Branch Secretary

RTBU OWNED TRAINING ORGANISATION



As all of you would be aware, training organisations in our industry often deliver sub-standard training. The RTBU has long been concerned with the safety implications that arise as a result of poor practice by such organisations, and now, we are setting out to fix that problem.

On 1 August, the RTBU acquired **Training Ahead Australia (TAA)**. We plan to maximise its potential to:

- Ensure quality training for our industry
- Deliver medicals (Category 3 at first and then more later)
- Improve safety standards
- Become a point of recruitment
- Deliver training to our Officials, employees, Delegates, HSRs and more.
- In time, offer free courses to all RTBU members who want to upskill or cross-skill and tap into other industry opportunities

Over the coming months, key personnel from TAA and the RTBU will meet to formulate a strategy on how to maximise TAA's potential

for the benefit of all members. This will include strategy on expansion of its Victorian operations to the rest of the country, expanding the medicals and courses TAA offers, and even considering whether to turn TAA into a not-for-profit for the benefit of all.

TAA's ultimate success will take time to achieve. We are hitting the ground running but will need your patience and support over the coming period while we map out and then steer TAA to its full potential.

It is an exciting time to be in our industry, and I will make sure our union takes full advantage to ensure members are front and centre.

As enterprise agreement negotiations arise, if there is potential at your employer for TAA to deliver training, we will be seeking your backing to force clauses into the enterprise agreement requiring your employer to train workers with TAA. Being union trained at union quality will and should become a way of life in our industries. But your support is essential to achieve this.

Over time, I want to ensure that your RTBU membership will bring you much more than the union representation we deliver today, but also

as members' career progression and training partner for life. As TAA grows and becomes more successful, we intend to provide training opportunities for members to upskill or cross skill within our industries - free of charge.

All of this will take time to achieve and we thank you for your patience and understanding as we embark on one of the most transformative endeavours the RTBU has undertaken in recent years.

I am committed to seeing this project through and ensuring we are there at every step of your career, ensuring that your job in rail or public transport remains a job for life!

Should you wish to find out more, don't hesitate to get in contact with me.

Vik Sharma
Victorian Branch Secretary



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Joe Dennis

Organiser

SAFETY INSPECTIONS DEMONSTRATE THE NEED FOR MORE

Following the recent and much needed upgrade of Greensborough train station as part of the Southern Program Alliance (SPA) I received a number of calls regarding safety concerns.

The day after Metro management had a conducted a walk-through and opened the station to the public, what I found when I attended site was far from what we expect of modern worksites in Australia.

The overpass had several tripping hazards which continued onto the platform. Numerous bolts were exposed from the asphalt on the platform, some as much as 10cm. There were issues with drainage on the platform and exposed ceiling insulation in areas on the concourse. The first aid kit did not meet the needs and requirements of the site and there was no visible signage to help staff locate it.

Further inspection led me to discover an unfinished, fenced off stairwell attended by a security guard who informed me he was there "to give access to the public if the lifts don't

work." That staircase was half tiled, had exposed metal beams, had insufficient railing to prevent a fall, insufficient lighting, and an exit into a live construction site flooded with water and mud. There was no delineation fence to prevent someone being hit by a piece of plant.

When I asked if there was a defibrillator on site, I was informed that it was removed because it wasn't being used.

A phone call was made to management and to WorkSafe attended the site several days later and rectified a number of safety issues.

I have continued to attend projects throughout Victoria. The much-delayed inland rail project is now in full swing with Glenrowen almost completed and the Barnawartha site starting up. This project will assist in enabling the double stacking of freight on the east coast, leading to less trucks on the roads and a more efficient freight network.

For all V/Line infrastructure members, EA

bargaining is set to kick off shortly. Rest assured negotiations won't take place without the RTBU first speaking to members regarding the log of claims.

While I've been out speaking with members and delegates across the state, online meetings will also take place shortly. Keep an eye out for the invitation to these meetings to have your say on the negotiation.

I would also like to thank both Shane Hommelhoff (V/Line), Jim Rix (ARTC) and Brian Kelly (V/Line) for their assistance as Delegates and congratulate them on achieving 40 years as members of the RTBU. You have all earned the respect on the job, with the union and members across the state. Wishing you an enjoyable retirement. Thank you.

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

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Vik Sharma

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Admin & Salaried Division

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Secretary: John Nicolopolous

Rail Operations Division

Secretary: Darren Galea

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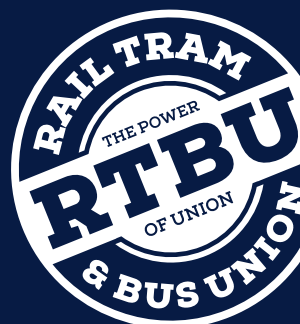
David Paton



@rtbuvic



/RTBUvic/





Darren Galea

Secretary Rail Operations Division

VALE SPIROS KONDILIS

The RTBU mourns the loss of stalwart and comrade Spiros Kondilis, proud RTBU Member, Delegate and Network Security and Surveillance Officer. Beloved husband to Helen, and proud father to Thalia and Jamie.

The RTBU was deeply shocked and saddened to hear of the sudden passing of Spiros Kondilis.

Spiros joined the RTBU as a junior station assistant at Caulfield Station for MetRail in 1987.

Working the Stations throughout the 90s, Spiros witnessed the amalgamation of Rail Tram and Bus Union and the privatisation of public transport before his railway career eventually saw him join the ranks of the Authorised Officers, and eventually the Network Security and Surveillance

team.

Spiros always took pride in his job and cherished the camaraderie within his teams.

He valued integrity and work ethic within his professional and personal life. Described by those who knew him as charismatic and hardworking, Spiros was made for the role of Delegate.

Never shy for a fight, he was always prepared to stand up and call out unacceptable behaviour from the bosses. He fought hard for the members he represented on the job and within enterprise agreements.

Spiros's legacy extends beyond the workplace.



He was a devoted family man who cherished his loved ones above all else. His wisdom, humour, and unconditional love enriched the lives of his family and friends.

A close comrade of Spiro shared this message in memory of him: "Thank you, my brother. You taught me so much about work, family and life. You are one of the greats. I love you and I miss you."

Spiros leaves behind a profound impact on all of those who were lucky enough to know him.

He will be sorely missed, but his memory will live on through all the lives he touched.

Vale Spiros.



RTBU DEFEATS V/LINE'S CASUALISATION BY STEALTH

The RTBU recently initiated a dispute with V/Line over workers' ability to access their paid sick leave entitlement. We were informed by members that V/Line employees were being denied access to their accrued sick leave benefit should they call in sick. We know this was happening when part timers were working rostered shifts in excess of their minimum contracted hours, but it could be more widespread.

Any full time or part time worker who is rostered to work a shift should be able to access their sick leave entitlement if they can't attend on the day due to illness or caring responsibilities. RTBU maintains that this is covered by the V/Line Agreement and the National Employment Standards contained in the Fair Work Act.

It appears that V/Line has been treating some workers like casuals and denying them access to paid sick leave. This is unacceptable. Many part timers work rosters with equivalent, or close to,

full time hours and have the desire to work full time, if this opportunity wasn't denied by V/Line.

Members are effectively losing pay versus an equivalent full time employee working the same roster – simply because they fell ill and couldn't attend work.

In some regions V/Line is only advertising vacant roles as part time, knowing full well that they intend to exploit these new workers. It is an intentional move to undermine job security for the entire workforce while denying new starters access to full time rights and entitlements. The RTBU is also aware of rumours that V/Line Regional Managers have a KPI for employing new starters to part time roles. If true, this is a new low for V/Line.

Exploiting new starters and denying them access to a full time role is a disgrace and needs to stop.

What happens next?

V/Line have recently conceded the RTBU's argument around access to personal leave when falling ill on any rostered shift.

While this dispute originated in the North East, we cannot be certain that it is not more widespread.

Check your pay slip. If you are a part time or full time employee and have had access to paid sick leave denied, please contact your local RTBU Delegate, your RTBU Divisional Secretary Darren Galea or your RTBU Organiser Sally van Bragt. You can also register with the RTBU office by emailing rtbu@rtbuvic.com.au.

RTBU will prepare a list of affected members and engage V/Line to ensure they are back paid for any occasion where they have been denied paid sick leave.

RTBU will continue to push for improved conditions in upcoming EA negotiations.





Sally Van Bragt

Organiser

FRANKSTON SIGNAL BOX

On the morning of Friday 21 July, the RTBU was made aware by members of the partial structure collapse of the Frankston Signal Box.

RTBU organisers and HSRs attended the signal box on the day to sight the damage for themselves and were shocked to find out Metro had failed to notify WorkSafe as they didn't believe the partial collapse was significant enough to warrant reporting.

The front wall of the box had dropped onto the rodding for 61 and 62 Points requiring fitters to attend the signal box and book the levers that operate those points out of service. Members were concerned they had been told to continue working **the lever frame (VR A Pattern Cam and Tappet)** prior to the structure being deemed safe by an independent structural engineer.

An attempt was made to raise the front wall off

the point rodding which caused the support pylons to splinter. Stabilisation measures have now been completed with and the signal box signed off as safe for use. The question is though, for how long?

Frankston Signal Box celebrated its 100th anniversary in August last year and unfortunately is looking every day of its age. Under the previous Signalling Department Manager, the signal box was allocated \$2,000,000 for the roof to be repaired. This work is yet to be done.

WorkSafe were quickly notified and will be keeping a close eye on the repairs once they commence to ensure they are of a suitable standard.

Due to a Heritage Listing, repairing the box will be costly, but for long can Metro continue to put cost ahead of members safety? The RTBU will continue to push for this work to be prioritised!



Victor Moore

Admin, Supervisory, Technical & Professional Division President

URGENT SAFETY CONCERN: DEFIBRILLATORS AT STATIONS

On 17 July, a distressing incident unfolded when a Station Staff Member was injured whilst using a defibrillator at Glen Waverley Station.

While trying to provide CPR first aid, the staff member received a jolt from the automatic defibrillator device, which threw them backward.

Following the incident, a meeting was organised with Metro management, Station Staff, HSR, and the RTBU.

It deeply concerned the RTBU to be told the malfunction of the device was either due to the "stand clear" warning prior to emitting the charge was either too quiet to hear, or the device failed to emit the required message to ensure the safety of our members.

Neither the affected staff member nor those in the immediate vicinity heard any "stand clear" warning.

Fortunately, a coworker standing nearby was able to catch them when they were thrown

back due to the shock. In the environment of a station with high foot traffic and noise, both circumstances could have led to a much worse outcome and requires urgent attention from Metro.

Despite the fanfare made during rail safety week, it is worrying that Metro's words seem to fall empty as they try to sweep this issue under the rug. The RTBU is alarmed that Metro has failed to distribute any communications to members regarding this important safety issue.

In response to this event, we have raised the following concerns with Metro management:

- The HSR and deputy HSR at Glen Waverley station were not immediately made aware of the incident.
- Management attempted to question the injured member without their HSR or the RTBU being aware of the circumstances.
- No advice was sent out to other stations

using similar devices regarding the need for caution.

We have also made it clear to Metro of our expectations following this incident:

- This incident has highlighted the need for proper defibrillator and first-aid training to be provided to all frontline staff.
- The policies and procedures regarding the operation of defibrillators need an urgent review
- The incident that occurred at Glen Waverley Station needs to be considered a safety concern, and thus shared with other stations. There is no evidence this issue is isolated to Glen Waverley.

To this end, if Metro fails (especially during Rail Safety Week) to advise our members of a potential hazard, then we reserve our right to do so.

Contact us

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