

RTBU EXPRESS



The Official Newsletter of the Rail Divisions of the RTBU Victorian Branch
VOL 10 | Issue 8 | Sep 12 Tuesday 2023



Vik Sharma

State Secretary

PUBLIC TRANSPORT STRIKES TO HIT MELBOURNE NETWORK

With enterprise bargaining in full swing, industrial action is in sight across public transport.

Metro Operations EA

Looking to progress sluggish negotiations, a protected action ballot is now underway for members covered by the Metro Operations EA.

Bargaining since March, Delegates are working hard to ensure a strong YES vote for action to send a strong message to management that helps press on our claims. It is important all members vote Yes to all proposed action items.

Once industrial action is endorsed, the RTBU will inform members of next steps based on the conduct of negotiations and ensure members are ready to rumble to lock in the best deal possible.

V/Line Operations EA

Bargaining has continued with V/Line for improved conditions across the regional network. The RTBU has made clear there are numerous core claims that members need to provide protection and certainty in the face of major projects and modernisation of the network.

Whilst bargaining has been underway, V/Line's Director of Workplace Relations, Harry Hilliar has been busy attacking members conditions through a hapless strategy that appears to undermine negotiations.

Your Organisers Darren Galea and Sally van Bragt have been busy at work with the strong support of Industrial Officer Callen Parsons, raising disputes that put V/Line on the back foot at this critical time.

Numerous disputes have been opened by the RTBU against V/Line with a number of wins for

members. Read more over the page on the details.

The RTBU will continue to tighten the screws on management and ensure they respect your EA and the negotiations at hand. Should industrial action be required there will be no hesitation to consult with delegates and implement the necessary measures to get members the best possible deal.

We have also been busy over in the tramways supporting members from Yarra Trams Rolling Stock and Infrastructure Depots that have lodged for protected industrial action where a legal battle now ensues with Yarra Trams who are seeking to challenge legally our application for a ballot!

Vik Sharma

Victorian Branch Secretary



RTBU
The power of Union

Operations | Infrastructure | Workshops | Salaried

rtbuvic.com.au | (03) 8630 9100

Level 2, 365 Queen Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000 Ertbu@rtbuvic.com.au F 03 8630 9122



**Darren Galea**

Secretary Rail Operations Division

Sally van Bragt

Organiser

Callen Parsons

Industrial Officer

WHAT IS GOING ON AT V/LINE?

With bargaining underway for a new Enterprise Agreement, V/Line has decided that now is the time to attempt to divide the workforce by introducing changes that breach the existing EA. The RTBU continues to hold V/Line accountable.

It is not clear if this is a strategy created by V/Line's Director of Workplace Relations, Harry Hilliar, or just a series of unfortunate events. Members will make up their own minds on that question.

As a result of V/Line's actions, the RTBU has been forced to initiate a number of disputes across the state. Here's an update on Harry's cavalcade of chaos:

1. North-East Roster Change

V/Line attempted to introduce a new roster for Albury based members, circumventing the agreed processes around consultation and representation. After the RTBU initiated a dispute in response to the employer's action, V/Line withdrew the proposed roster and agreed to consult as per the EA and established protocols. The RTBU is keeping a close eye on the North-East region as it appears that some managers have not learnt the lessons from this dispute.

Outcome: **RTBU win for members**

2. Acting in higher dispute

V/Line attempted to introduce a 'rule' that a manager would decide if a person was to be paid at the higher rate when acting in a higher position. This clearly breached the clause in the EA that says if you're asked to act in higher, you must be paid at the higher rate. The RTBU raised this concern through many avenues, but it was only after the RTBU initiated a formal dispute that V/Line accepted the RTBU's position and issued a notice to all managers stating 'V/Line confirms that any person performing a role above their substantive classification will be paid the higher rate as per the Agreement regardless of experience or knowledge base.'

Outcome: **RTBU win for members**

3. Service Manager classification - Bendigo

V/Line attempted to change the Service Manager classification from SM7 to SM6. The RTBU pushed back on this, arguing that there is no mechanism to change this classification back to SM6 while also pointing out that a new classification structure was a key part of ongoing EA negotiations. If V/Line want to table a claim in negotiations, the RTBU will consider it on its merits. After lengthy discussions, it appears that V/Line management has accepted that the EA negotiation table is the correct place to discuss classification matters and have paused their claim.

Outcome: **RTBU win for members**

4. Underpayment of sick leave

V/Line attempted to deny part time workers access to paid sick leave. Most members will know there has been a strategic effort by V/Line to employ as many part time workers as possible, exploiting the provisions around part time workers taking on shifts in excess of their minimum contracted hours at the ordinary rate. If this exploitation wasn't enough, V/Line then denied part time workers access to their own accrued sick leave entitlement if they fell ill prior to a rostered shift that was in excess of their minimum hours. The RTBU fought this injustice through a formal dispute which resulted in V/Line accepting the RTBU's position and agreeing to back pay any worker denied their rightful sick leave entitlement.

Outcome: **RTBU win for members**

5. Relocation of sign on/off from Geelong to Warrnambool

V/Line has attempted to move sign on and off for certain shifts from Geelong to Warrnambool. This has created a number of issues around safety and equity, to name just a couple. The RTBU has initiated a dispute around consultation for this major change, arguing that the broad based 'direction' for all conductors to sign on and off at Warrnambool didn't take into account the impact of individuals nor consider alternatives.

This matter is ongoing and the RTBU will continue to ensure that members' views are heard as we attempt to resolve this matter.

Ongoing: **RTBU continues to fight for members**

6. Reclassification of Booking Office staff - Geelong

In the most baffling attempt of all, V/Line has attempted to activate a clause from the previous EA relating to Booking Office staff being integrated into a broader classification. V/Line had the opportunity to use this clause during the last Agreement that expired in 2019, but didn't take the opportunity and left the roles as they were. The RTBU's position is that V/Line had a 'use it or lose it' opportunity prior to 2019 and, subsequently, lost it with the clause being deleted from the current Agreement. The reality reflects this position, with the roles and classifications remaining substantially unchanged since 2015. As with the Service manager classification dispute, the RTBU is firmly of the view that the EA negotiation table is the correct place to discuss classification matters and have encouraged V/Line to raise this matter there.

Ongoing: **RTBU continues to fight for members**

While we can't be certain that Harry Hilliar's strategy is to create as much havoc as possible for RTBU members, it certainly brings into focus the need for RTBU members to be ready for the next stage of our campaign, including potential industrial action.

Make sure your contact details are up to date so you can play your part in sending V/Line a clear message: RTBU members will fight back against Harry Hilliar's attack on our rights and entitlements.

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

Branch Secretary

Vik Sharma

Infrastructure Division

Secretary: Jon Saw

Admin & Salaried Division

President: Victor Moore

Secretary: John Nicolopolous

Rail Operations Division

Secretary: Darren Galea

Workshops Division

Secretary: Paul Jumpertz

Infrastructure, Workshops & Labour Hire

Organiser: Bryan Evans

Organiser: Joe Dennis



@rtbuvic



/RTBUvic/

Industrial Officer

Amanda Swayn

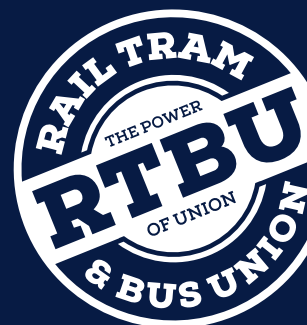
Callen Parsons

Operations & Admin

Organiser

Sally van Bragt

David Paton





Joe Dennis

Organiser

OUT AND ABOUT

Puffing Billy: Bridge on the brink

RTBU Members at Puffing Billy Railway have expressed concerns about the condition of the historic trestle bridge spanning Monbulk Creek in Selby.

The bridge, constructed in 1899, now stands at 124 years of age.

Renowned for its timber craftsmanship, this 15-span structure has received recognition from the National Trust of Victoria.

It plays a pivotal role in carrying the railway across Monbulk Creek and Gembrook Road, measuring an impressive 91.4 meters in length and 12.8 meters high.

In February 2023, the Stirling Group conducted a comprehensive inspection of the bridge, identifying multiple defects that have yet to be addressed.

These defects include issues from termite damage, missing bolts, splitting piles,

deteriorating girders, wood decay, to bent bracing, among others.

The inspection report documented approximately 47 distinct concerns, with most requiring rectification by November 2023.

The RTBU remains committed to closely monitoring the progress of repair work on the trestle bridge over the forthcoming months, and we will provide members regular updates regarding its status.

Metro's Safety Cuts: On Track For Trouble

An ongoing matter of concern within Metro Projects is management's persistent pursuit of strategies to reduce the number of safeworkers present on construction sites raising major concerns for all members working across the Metro network.

Metro's safety team is blindly convinced that a chain-link fence is an adequate safety guard to prevent large machinery from entering the danger zone.

The RTBU is concerned that without a dedicated safeworker in place, there would be insufficient time to alert oncoming trains to any potential hazards or dangers.

In the upcoming weeks, I will be visiting numerous sites to question Metro's safety managers about these safety measures.

I will also be meeting with Metro along with representatives from other industry players to demand they address our shared concerns regarding what appears to be a blatant cost-cutting endeavour that jeopardizes the safety and lives of RTBU Members.

If you have any questions or wish to arrange a prestart or site visit, contact me at 0403 863 869.

Your safety and well-being are of paramount importance.





Darren Galea

Secretary Rail Operations Division

Victor Moore

Admin, Supervisory,
Technical & Professional Division President

David Paton

Organiser

Bryan Evans

Organiser

WHAT'S NOT IN METRO'S OFFER?

The RTBU has many significant claims for the new Metro Enterprise Agreement (EA) which focus on the following categories:

Job Security – Claims such as **No Forced Redundancies** and consultation provisions are carefully designed to deal with the threats to jobs by technological change. This includes the implementation of new ticketing systems, impacts of CBTC & new projects. Job security clauses involve empowering members and the union to deal with change on our terms and to protect jobs. These claims are of a non-financial nature and seek to maintain valuable railway careers and secure classification structures.

Safety and Equality – These claims deal with fair treatment of sick and injured workers, looking after members who have been assaulted, and fair treatment through equitable processes.

Wages and Conditions – These claims deal with more direct financial and work-life balance conditions such as the 36 hour week with no loss of pay. The RTBU Bargaining team continues to press Metro to achieve a fair days'

pay for a fair days' work by incorporating a number of financial claims for members. We are focused on conditions that other RTBU members receive covered by other Metro EAs.

LOOK AT WHAT IS NOT IN THE METRO "OFFER"!

Metro's offer does **not** provide job security to operations members.

Metro's offer does **nothing** to improve conditions of part-timers.

Metro's offer does **nothing** to ensure internal recruitment or protect Railway Careers.

Metro's offer does **nothing** to improve work life balance.

This agreement is about ensuring RTBU members have safe secure work, a rewarding career, and are paid in recognition of their valuable work in a testing public transport environment.

The Protected Action Ballot means we are prepared as RTBU members to back up our demands with action.

The claims that matter most in this EA don't cost Metro a dollar, yet they refuse and that's what this campaign is all about.

On 13 September, Metro RTBU Members will have the opportunity to send a clear message to the company, by voting YES to protected industrial action.

Our message to Metro has stayed the same throughout, this is our network, our union and our agreement. We won't settle until our concerns of **job security, safety and equality, and wages and conditions** are addressed!

Contact your Organiser if you have any further questions.



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

Branch Secretary

Vik Sharma

Infrastructure Division

Secretary: Jon Saw

Admin & Salaried Division

President: Victor Moore
Secretary: John Nicolopolous

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
Callen Parsons

Operations & Admin

Organiser
Sally van Bragt
David Paton



@rtbuvic



/RTBUvic/

