

RTBU EXPRESS



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

AIR QUALITY IN-FOCUS AS EA PROGRESSES

V/Line Operations EA: Bargaining Update

Intensive Bargaining continues with V/Line for a replacement Operations enterprise agreement where positive steps of progress have been made at each meeting.

These meetings have taken place twice a week since our breakthrough that has opened the door to drawing sense from V/Line management.

This progress has come as a direct result of intensifying industrial action where RTBU members at V/Line caused management to engage in intensive negotiations which include a government representative and the provision of transparent information to better facilitate our ability to negotiate over facts.

While a deal is yet to be struck, we continue to keep the pressure on V/Line to ensure members get the working conditions they deserve.

Air Quality: Southern Cross Station

Members would be aware of ongoing concerns raised about air quality at Southern Cross Station. Recent data obtained by and reported on by ABC News opens a new layer to the campaign.

In response to recent developments, the RTBU has written to key stakeholders at the station including V/Line, Metro, Southern Cross Station Authority (Infra Nexus), and the Department of Transport and Planning demanding action be taken.

The RTBU has worked with the ABC in the process of uncovering the true depth and breadth of possible issues, but it is evident that more information, consultation and action is required to ensure the station is a safer place to work.

New medical advice indicates that the current workplace standards are insufficient and require modernisation. The RTBU believes that updated exposure standards are required to

give legal effect to the medical advice, but in the interim employers must take all reasonable steps to provide improved air quality.

Our immediate demands are as follow:

- A letter to all employees working at Southern Cross Station regarding their exposure to diesel fumes and the associated health impacts
- Ongoing monitoring of all occupational health impacts for everyone working in the station precinct
- Immediate consultation over the air
- quality monitoring, including sample locations, types of testing, availability of data and transparency of process
- Comprehensive, accurate and readily available testing results
- A review of risk controls to minimise or remove exposure and improve air quality
- Training for all HSRs, Union Delegates and Supervisors in Southern Cross Stations regarding air quality, and
- Education campaign regarding exposure issues and controls, health impacts etc, across all operators.

A survey has been setup for members working in the station as we continue to push this campaign forward. Should you have any queries or ideas don't hesitate to get in touch with your Organiser.

Vik Sharma
Victorian Branch Secretary



Click here to complete the survey



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Joe Dennis

Organiser

PUSHING FOR PROJECT PIPELINES

With the Metro Tunnel in testing and final stages of construction, industry is reprogramming for the projects on the horizon.

With the pipeline already having shrunk in the short term, inland rail is ramping up, level crossing removals and the regional line upgrades continue, but Victoria needs an extra injection to keep the boom in swing.

Many Safe Workers and labour hire members are experiencing the reduction of hours first hand. Recognising this, the RTBU has been working hard not just to demand a level playing field for the awarding of contracts, but also to ensure the pipeline remains open.

Making representations to Government, Branch Secretary Vik Sharma has continued to advocate for projects to get off the ground faster and for smaller packages of sensible works to be undertaken immediately.

With the Victorian state budget around the corner, the RTBU has continued to advocate for a continuous pipeline of work including the prompt commencement of Airport Rail.

Several projects have been issued notices for non-compliance of plant and facilities which continue to keep me very busy, where out of date paperwork, unregistered, and non-compliant plant has halted work on several major projects.

In the coming months I will continue to visit sites to keep members safe by ensuring compliance with safety regulations on all sites across Victoria.

Our on-site representation across projects continues to grow and get stronger. With Owen, Junior and Charlie working tirelessly for members the feedback has been overwhelming with a direct point of contact.

With almost full coverage of enterprise agreements across the sector, we have non-union companies in our sights as the influence of members continues to grow.

If you have any issues on site or want to arrange a Prestart meeting with the union please call me on 0403 863 869

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Sally van Bragt

Organiser

CONFERENCE SUCCESS & PROBE EA

Women's CONFERENCE

On Thursday 21 March the annual RTBU Women's Conference debut it's new structure that saw active women participate in a never before delivered training session that was developed especially for the conference.

Focusing on Gendered and Family Violence, NDAs and sexual harassment, as well as how to provide initial support to any member who may disclose an issue, the new training was overwhelmingly well received by all the women who attended.

Probe

RTBU members working for Probe on the PTV Campaign are getting ready to commence negotiations on a new EA. The previous EA expired in 2019 which thanks to a the nature of the organisation within the scope of previous workplace legislation, bargaining has been notoriously difficult to initiate.

Thanks to the new IR laws that came into effect in 2023, management will be required to bargain a new EA. As such we are preparing our bargaining strategy and finalising claims.

To ensure members views are captured we are keen to hear from any Probe employees interested in helping in various capacities with this round of bargaining. Please contact me to find out more or register your interest.



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