

RTBU EXPRESS

The Official Newsletter of the Rail Divisions of the RTBU Victorian Branch
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Luba Grigorovitch

State Secretary

CLARRIE O'SHEA CELEBRATION – 15 MAY

This coming May marks an anniversary of monumental importance to the RTBU and indeed to our entire union movement.

On the 15 May 1969, Clarrie Lyell O'Shea, Secretary of the Victorian Tramways and Motor Omnibus Employees' Association (ATMOEA), entered a courtroom of the Commonwealth Industrial Court. O'Shea would be ordered to produce his Union's financial books to determine their ability to pay \$11,000 in crippling penal fines for illegal striking.

This was Australia under almost twenty years of conservative government, with some of the most draconian and repressive labour laws in any country in the Western world. The right of working people to strike was effectively criminalised by these penal powers, shackling them to the dictates of the boss and often appalling wages and conditions.

ATMOEA in Victoria was among a number of militant left-wing "rebel" unions that had never accepted being cowed by these penal powers, and had spent the past twenty years doing all they could in united action to educate working people to the nature of the penal powers' attacks on their rights, and mobilising together to oppose them. O'Shea, a lifelong unionist and militant from the now historically distant Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist), had joined the tramways aged 20 and was very much a product of his fellow workers' proud trade unionism and traditions as he was a leader of it.

O'Shea refused to be sworn in on the stand, affirming his responsibility as a unionist to his members' funds as much as their wages and conditions, and was promptly jailed for contempt by a judge named John Kerr. Thus began the 1969 General Strike of workers across Australia demanding Clarrie O'Shea be freed and the penal powers be abolished.

Within 24 hours, half a million workers were striking and marching in all of Australia's major cities and towns. The militancy and daring hope of the post-war labour movement, combined with a mass movement of defiance against a war in Vietnam, the students' power, Aboriginal rights and women's liberation movements bared their fruits as working people and their allies downed tools and took to the streets across the breadth of an island continent.

Within one week, Clarrie O'Shea was released from Pentridge Prison. The Tramways Union paid not one cent of its penal fines and the penal powers were a dead letter for all time.

This year on 15 May marks 50 years since this historic event. In order to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1969 General Strike victory and Clarrie O'Shea's example, the RTBU is hosting a commemorative function on the evening of Wednesday 15 May.

With working people and our movement facing more challenges than ever before from the unjust laws and greed of capital and the bosses, 1969 is history we must remember and live more than ever. Together with today's leaders, historians and veterans of the strike, we'll remember and celebrate the millions of ordinary men and women who made history and struck a triumphant blow for democracy and the right to strike in Australia - and most important of all, remember the lessons of 1969 that we must break the rules to change them.

I urge all RTBU members and their families to join us for this great event on May 15.

Luba Grigorovitch
- State Secretary

REMEMBERING
Clarrie O'Shea
FIGHTING FOR THE
RIGHT TO STRIKE

**50TH ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION**

Wednesday 15 May
Doors 5:30PM. Speeches 6:30PM

THE SUBSTATION
1 MARKET ST, NEWPORT VIC

Tickets \$10
FINGERFOOD PROVIDED

RSVP: RTBUVIC.COM.AU/CLARRIEOSHEA





Jeff Ford
V/Line Delegate

V/LINE – AROUND THE TRAPS

Once again V/Line were found again not following their own policies and procedures when it came to vacant positions and recruitment. There were staff in the conductors’ pool, however when a position came up they never received a phone call for an interview.

Therefore, a formal dispute was put in because the correct procedure was not followed. This is not the first time this has happened, and it caused distain for the individuals involved who were not given the opportunity to interview.

We are still working to get every position advertised network wide so that everyone in V/Line is aware of what positions are available to apply for.

The first option for the buffets in the new Vlocity trains was sitting at nine meters long. V/Line then came back offering two metres by two metres, so the buffet working party committee set up a risk assessment on the old buffets that are currently in the n-sets.

The risk assessment showed there was hardly enough room in the current buffets, so V/Line therefore came back and offered four metres long, which with the correct design and layout of the new buffets should work out well when the new buffets are finalised.

Another issue that we have also been dealing with is the V/Line shirts. It took a lot of work and negotiation to get the males to be able to order a blue shirt so they didn’t have to cook and sweat in their current shirts that are provided. The lavender colour shirts that staff were having to wear attracted a lot of dirt and dust, not making it a very good look to the public considering they usually are the front-line staff that the public see first.

At the end of the day not many people care about the colour of the shirt, it is the materials they are made from as to whether these shirts are breathable or not. The current shirts are not very breathable and therefore make it uncomfortable to work in. The main thing they need to get right is having a comfortable uniform to work in and not have them made cheaply.

We are hopeful that a uniform working party will be set up to get these shirts done properly once and for all i.e. colour, materials and length.

There was also a new service being introduced to Shepparton and discussion occurred as to where trains would be stabled in Shepparton overnight as well as push backs being involved. There was frustration from the SO3 station staff as they were being required to perform these duties and be in charge of these push backs. The problem was that these duties are not in their job descriptions.

After numerous meetings with management it was agreed they were doing extra duties and responsibilities, so in the next EBA we will have to introduce a new position of an SO4 to compensate all these extra responsibility’s and duties which will affect many other staff in regional areas.

Also in Shepparton there were massive issues for staff to safely perform these new push backs in the Shepparton yard with fencing and lighting that we had agreed in writing from V/Line would be fixed, that had not been fixed yet.

There were issues of trespassers crossing the yard day and night as the current fence is so run down it would not be worth fixing and the last thing that anyone wants is staff dealing with trauma from hitting someone in the yard.

After a few meetings it has now been agreed that the existing fences on either side will be upgraded with razor wire on top of it. There will be extra poles and lighting to be extended at both ends of the yard to light the whole yard up so these new push backs can be done safely.

The new fence and lighting hopefully will keep trespassers out of the yard and help protect V/Lines rolling stock from vandalism and protect our members from any incidents.



Vik Sharma
Industrial Officer

INTRODUCING VIK SHARMA

I have been in the industry for nearly 5 years and I am a final year law student. I am passionate about industrial and employment law and I am a big believer of ‘Fighting for Fair’. I believe I could not have started this role at a better time, and I am honoured to be working with the RTBU and our membership.

As members know, Metro EA negotiations are in full swing. We will continue to represent our members at these negotiations to try and

achieve the best possible outcome for our members. There have been significant works around the rail network in the last 4 years and therefore the scope of Metro’s operations has changed drastically since the last EA. In the forthcoming negotiation meetings, we endeavour to address that change so it meets our members’ expectations and working conditions.

V/Line negotiations will commence shortly and

a Delegates’ meeting has been scheduled on Thursday 18 April 2019 to discuss and endorse the log of claims.

I have replaced Alice Dunn as she is currently on maternity leave. If members have any industrial queries or questions, please feel free to contact me on 0413 363 923 or email vik.sharma@rtbuvic.com.au. The RTBU will continue to fight for our members’ rights and I look forward to working with each of you.

RTBU BACKPACKS HAVE ARRIVED

Available for pick up at the RTBU Head Office or delivery at standard parcel post rates.

\$55



Joe Dennis
Organiser

AROUND THE TRAPS

With the Metro Enterprise Agreement in full swing and the V/Line agreement about to begin, our office and Delegates are in for a busy time ahead. Delegates and Organisers continue to visit work places to update as many members as we can. As you can appreciate this is a huge task as most of our members at both Metro and V/line members work rotating rosters, therefore making it impossible for us to catch everyone.

We will continue to update as many staff members as we can along the way and will arrange meetings at the appropriate times to discuss the agreement as we progress through bargaining.

The Minister for Public Transport Melissa Horne, Public Transport Victoria (PTVs) Alan Fedda, Branch Secretary Luba Grigorovitch, Probe Delegates and I recently met with the CEO of Probe for a walk around of the PTV Call Centre in Latrobe Street. This visit strengthened our relationship with our PTV Call Centre members who were excited to see the Minister in their workplace and shed some light on the many issues at the Call Centre.

Probe’s Enterprise Agreement is also about to expire on 25 April 2019. In conjunction with the National Union of Workers (NUW) and Australian Services Union (ASU), there has been several attempts to get Probe to begin negotiation, but to date they have not cooperated. We will continue to communicate with Probe management in the hope of coming together to begin negotiations for our members.

There was also a recent announcement made regarding a restructure of PTV, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) and VicRoads all joining together under one Government department of Transport. The Roads Traffic Management Centre provides priority to trams and buses during disruptions and the consolidation of VicRoads and PTV aims to minimise the impacts on people as well as assist in customer messaging and engagement of future projects. This restructure will help passengers move from point A to B faster by liaising between departments and organising disruptions.

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- Professional negligence claims
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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
Luba Grigorovitch

Infrastructure Division
Secretary: Jon Saw

Admin & Salaried Division
Organiser: Joe Dennis
Secretary: Steven Kozmevski

Rail Operations Division
Organiser: Darren Galea

Workshops Division
Secretary: Paul Jumpertz

Infrastructure, Workshops & Labour Hire
Organiser: Bryan Evans

Industrial Officer
Vik Sharma

RTBU WOMEN MEETING IN BENDIGO

The next meeting of RTBU Women is being held in Bendigo on Thursday 9 May 2019 from 11:30am – 1:00pm.

We hope to see as many regional women at the meeting as possible and look forward to the train journey with our sisters travelling from Melbourne.

For anyone wanting to attend the meeting that will be travelling from Melbourne, the RTBU Women's committee will be catching the 9:14am train from Southern Cross Station to Bendigo.

For release requests, please contact Hannah Scott at women@rtbuvic.com.au or on 0448 569 178.

We look forward to seeing you there!



RTBU Women at the April women's committee meeting at Melbourne Central

DELEGATES MEETING DATES – MAY 2019

- **1 May** – Metro NSS / CCTV – 1100 – 1200hrs
- **2 May** – Malvern AOs – B & C Delegates – 1000 – 1100hrs
- **2 May** – Hawthorn AOs – B & C Delegates – 1200hrs – 1300hrs
- **3 May** – V/Line Western – 1100 – 1200hrs
- **7 May** – Metro Central – Flinders Street – 1100 – 1200hrs
- **8 May** – Metro Caulfield – 1100 – 1200hrs
- **10 May** – V/Line South West – 1000 – 1100hrs
- **10 May** – Probe (PTV Call Centre) – 1000 – 1100hrs
- **15 May** – Metro Northern / Clifton Hill – Clifton Hill – 1100 – 1200hrs
- **15 May** – North Melbourne AOs – A & D Delegates – 1000 – 1100hrs
- **15 May** – TPH AOs – A & D Delegates – 1200 – 1300hrs
- **16 May** – V/Line Southern Cross – 1000 – 1100hrs
- **17 May** – V/Line Northern – 1100 – 1200hrs
- **22 May** – MMAOs – A & C Delegates – 1100 – 1200hrs
- **22 May** – Wilson Security – 1300 – 1400hrs
- **23 May** – Metro Burnley – 1100 – 1200hrs
- **28 May** – TfV (Transport for Victoria) – 1400 – 1500hrs
- **29 May** – V/Line Centrol – 1100 – 1200hrs
- **29 May** – V/Line Shunters – Southern Cross – 1100 – 1200hrs
- **30 May** – Metrol, Timetables, Rosters & Signallers – 1000 – 1200hrs