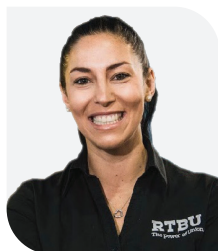


RTBU EXPRESS

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

State Secretary

TRAIN TRAGEDY HIGHLIGHTS SYSTEMIC NEGLECT OF RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE

Australia's rail community has been in mourning following the tragic loss of two lives in the Wallan derailment.

Our members are hurting, and our hearts go out to the families and friends of the two workers who were killed.

But along with our grief, the rail community is also angry at the Federal Government for its failure to invest in a safe and reliable 21st century interstate rail network.

While many details of the incident are still unclear, the RTBU has ascertained the following:

- On or around February 3, a truck collided with an ARTC power cable that feeds the Wallan signal box, starting a fire. That fire left the signals inoperable along a section of the rail line.
- The line continued operating at full speed, under pilot to navigate the XPT through the affected section.
- ARTC's rules allow for trains to continue at normal speeds while under the control of a pilot under such conditions. MTM and V/LINE, however, impose an automatic speed restriction of 25kmh.
- The XPT has been running on the main line through Wallan for the past two weeks and were doing so at track speed of around 100-130 k/hr.
- On Thursday 20 February, however, ARTC changed the route for trains through Wallan, moving trains from the main line to a passing loop line.

- A Track Authority notice was issued calling for 15k/hr speed restriction on trains entering the passing loop.

It appears that there were a range of likely contributing factors to the derailment. We believe, however, that if ARTC imposed the same speed restrictions under pilot that are applied by MTM and V/LINE, the incident may have been avoided.

The derailment also highlights the systemic neglect of interstate and regional rail infrastructure. The Melbourne-Sydney rail line should be the jewel in the crown of Australia's interstate rail network.

Instead, it's known within the industry as the 'goat track' because it is in such bad condition. For example, sections of the track are full of mudholes. This incident is another sign of an operator putting profits and on-time running trains before safety, on a network that has been neglected for too long.

This tragedy must be a wake-up call for politicians. It's time to stop treating rail as a second-class form of transport, and to bring Australia's regional and interstate rail infrastructure into the 21st century.

Luba Grigorovitch
- State Secretary

Are you receiving correspondence from us?

Your input is valuable.

As Members would be aware, the RTBU is communicating with Members more than ever through text messages and emails. While we understand everyone has their own specific circumstances, rosters and personal commitments we want to keep in touch as best possible.

We appreciate your participation in campaign actions such as rallies and station stunts, your efforts make our union **STRONGER**.

Did you know?

You can respond to text messages sent by the RTBU. If you have any queries or want to make your own contribution to any campaign, get in touch!

If you are not receiving text messages send an SMS to 0488 305 088 and include your full name and employer.

Are you getting the emails?

We have recently upgraded our email system to send you better, more engaging and valuable emails. We're keen to get your feedback.

If you are not receiving emails from RTBU Victoria:

- Check your junk mail/promotions tab in your email, you might need to add rtbu@rtbuvic.com.au to your address book or mark it as 'important' to ensure you get every update.
- If you are not currently receiving emails, update your details by sending an email to rtbu@rtbuvic.com.au or an SMS to 0488 305 088





Alice Dunn

Industrial Officer

THE CHALLENGES OF OUR MAJOR BARGAINING ROUND

As usual, the start of the year has been incredibly busy and shows no signs of slowing down. Our big challenge this year will be to finalise our major bargaining round. We are now facing two very different companies with different but equally damaging agendas.

Metro seeks to increase its profits at the expense of our members' safety by cutting driver conditions. The arrogance of this company has been growing these past months but I think they'll find they have underestimated the power of our Members.

These companies never seem to learn: they take their workforce for granted only to cower when the frustration of the workforce escalates. Preparations for our federal court appeal continue to take place with a hearing scheduled for 10 March.

V/Line is a company with a convenient excuse for its frugality: the Victorian Government. We have been bargaining in the shadow of the Victorian Government's bargaining policy which has been blamed for all sorts of issues: the extended timeframe, the inability to include simple agreement provisions, and the austerity style pay cap (2% per year).

Our V/Line Members will not accept this rubbish, and nor will they be taken for granted.

In the Rail and Tram industry we have a strong



culture of protecting the hard won rights in our enterprise agreements. It's about improving on what is there for our future and that of our future Members. It's a legacy we should be proud of and never give up.

Stop Press:

Yarra Trams Operations EA has reached in-principle agreement following the involvement of Industrial Relations Victoria, the Yarra Trams CEO and RTBU Secretary

Luba Grigorovitch.

This proposal was overwhelmingly endorsed by delegates and members on Friday with a schedule of workplace meetings to take place in the coming week before the final vote of all employees of Yarra Trams operations grades.

This agreement solidifies an industry benchmark for wages at 3.5% with a number of outstanding EAs that we are still working on. The fight continues!

V/LINE OPERATIONS EA INDUSTRIAL ACTION LODGED

YOUR EA

Thank you to all RTBU Members for their solidarity in taking Protected Industrial Action over the last three months.

The State Government was up in arms about the action that was occurring across the state. The RTBU was contacted on a number of occasions with pleas to withdraw all Protected Industrial Action. However, we refused given the membership has been overwhelmingly keen to take action.

An offer was put by the State Government for mediation to take place and assist with the negotiation of the enterprise agreement, this has been forthcoming with mediator Julius Roe.

The first mediation took place on the 25 February.

As a gesture of good-faith, we won't be notifying of taking further Protected Industrial

Action for two weeks from our first mediation.

We will continue to keep you up-to-date on the progress of bargaining.

Notice sent to V/Line Operations members on the 24 February 2020.

Contact us

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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

Alice Dunn

Industrial Officer /

Organiser

Vik Sharma



@rtbuvic



/RTBUvic/





Vik Sharma

Industrial Officer / Organiser

TOXIC SOIL DUMP PLAN – WYNDHAM VALE RAIL YARD

The state Government in its wisdom decided that it would be appropriate to dump the toll road's soil – contaminated with potential carcinogens PFAS and asbestos – at the Wyndham Vale rail yard, which is set to open in coming months.

The RTBU is deeply concerned with this news and has criticised the Government's decision.

Our members have a right, like all workers, to a safe workplace, free from dangerous chemicals. The proposed asbestos and PFAS-laced soil pose a huge risk to workers on the Wyndham Vale site, along with residents in the area more broadly. This is completely unacceptable to the RTBU.

There are legitimate questions about workers' safety, and we have notified the Government that we expect to be consulted at each step as this matter develops. We have also sought clarification regarding the timeline of this matter, whether the trains that run directly alongside this site will be affected, whether a risk assessment

was conducted to address both the short-term and long-term implications of this dumping including but not limited to the containment plan, future site usage and the impact on workers.

This site is just metres away from housing and four planned schools. The local MP, Treasurer Tim Pallas, claims it is going to be a temporary measure. If that were true, we fail to understand the need to double handle the toxic soil and the possible risks associated with handling.

We are awaiting a response from the Government.

We stand ready to fight to protect our members from this dangerous toxic dump.

We encourage you to attend the RTBU supported rally at 6.30PM on Tuesday March 3rd, Station Place, Werribee.

If members have any queries or questions, please feel free to contact me on 0413 363 923 or email vik.sharma@rtbuvic.com.au.

MEETING NOTICE FOR PROBE

Organiser Vik Sharma will be at the Probe LaTrobe Street site on Level 4 in the meals room from 2 PM - 3 PM on Friday 6 March 2020.

If you have your breaks during this time, feel free to come for a chat.

These sessions will be held on a monthly basis or more regularly if need be.

If you don't get the opportunity to speak to Vik on Friday, feel free to contact him on 0413 363 923 or email: vik.sharma@rtbuvic.com.au



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rt health





Joe Dennis
Organiser

OUT AND ABOUT

This past week I visited members in Donald, Ouyen, and Mildura (as pictured on right).

I met up with members from Track, Signalling and Communications, and Station Staff to give them EA updates.

My visits to Ouyen and Donald were a part of our new monthly meetings in the infrastructure area. These new monthly meetings will give our members in these areas a more regular opportunity to discuss ongoing issues with their Organiser.

We discussed heat policy and what we plan to do in this area moving forward.

Any questions, don't hesitate to contact me at joe.dennis@rtbuvic.com.au or on 0403 863 869.



Delegates Meeting Dates – March 2020

RTBU Organiser Darren Galea will be meeting on the following dates:

- 19 March – MMAOs – 1000hrs
- 23 March – NSS – 1030hrs
- 24 March – Southern Cross Vline Shunters – 1100hrs
- 25 March – Malvern AOs – 1000hrs
- 25 March – Hawthorn AOs – 1200hrs
- 26 March – Metrol Signallers/ Time tables/Schedulers – 1000hrs
- 26 March – DAOs – 1330hrs

Other meetings will be notified once confirmed.

\$1K

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DATE: THURS 5TH MARCH 2020
TIME: 09:30 – 16:30
VENUE: VICTORIAN TRADES HALL,
(CRN VICTORIA & LYBON ST, CARLTON
SOUTH)
RSVP ASAP!!
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