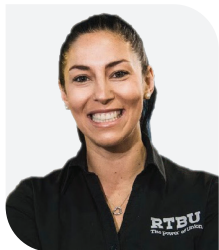


# RTBU EXPRESS

The Official Newsletter of the Rail Divisions of the RTBU Victorian Branch  
**VOL 7 | Issue 5 | Friday 08 May 2020**



**Luba Grigorovitch**

State Secretary

## HEALTH AND SAFETY COMES IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES

Many of our Members know the dangers of rough riding, especially on the Albury line.

But not all our Members would be aware of the dangers that rough riding can do to your body, and specifically the danger it can present to your breasts and chest.

Driver Rebecca Blanks knows all too well of this, after her initial incident in 2011 that left her with immense pain, many questions, and no answers.

Recent times have highlighted just how dangerous Victoria's GOAT tracks can be, after the NSW and Victorian rail industry sadly lost two members in an incident earlier this year.

RTBU members have long complained about the back and neck pain that rough riding can bring on.

Rebecca has compared the pain she felt as like mastitis.

Unfortunately, Rebecca was faced with the fact that her superiors would feel awkward and uncomfortable when she tried to discuss the pain and discomfort she was facing.

By 2014, after continuing to drive along this route as her job required, and despite wearing a compression bra, the pain had become agony.

After the long fight for answers, she finally had a result. A sports surgeon at the Australian Institute of Sport diagnosed her condition: a muscular skeletal injury to her chest wall, caused by rough riding. There was also internal bleeding in her breasts.

Her pectoral muscle was torn away from her rib cage.

We have stood beside Bec for a long time now as she has continued to fight with V/Line for



WorkCover claims. She eventually took the route of suing V/Line.

We congratulate Rebecca Blanks on reaching an out-of-court settlement, with V/Line agreeing to cover her medical bills.

We urge our Members, especially our female drivers, to speak up if they are suffering these same conditions. Health and Safety comes in all shapes and sizes, and there should be no shame in speaking up about injuries that occur at work.

We will be reigniting the RTBU Women's

campaign for compression bras to be introduced as a form of PPE at V/Line and Metro.

We will be calling on our major operators to stop shying away from this topic, and to bring in Compression Bras as a form of PPE and as a supplied uniform for their workers..

**Luba Grigorovitch**  
- State Secretary





**Darren Galea & Victor Moore**  
Organisers

# A WIN FOR MEMBERS AT METRO!



RTBU members across Metro trains operations recently voted on and endorsed the proposed EBA.

The EBA provides for a total of a 14% wage increase over 4 years with back pay to July 2019 and increase to allowances as well.

Considering the current issue of Covid -19 and the massive layoffs in other transport sectors and a looming recession the now endorsed EBA provides some certainty in an otherwise uncertain environment.

Officials and key Delegates from the Rail Divisions visited workplaces and held numerous job meetings to explain the EBA details to members.

Negotiations had dragged on with Metro for well over 12 months and a key turning point in the negotiating process was the expansion of the RTBU Rail Divisions negotiating team to include key Delegates. This occurred in December 2019 and provided an impetus to finalising our negotiations.

It showed that the Rail Divisions approach to negotiations were dynamic and we were willing to look at ways forward rather than getting stuck in a moribund process - incapable of finding a way out.

For members the new Metro EBA addresses some long-held claims to strengthen your rights at work including:

- Addressing Classification issues and

developing position descriptions.

- Converting a number of part-time positions to full time.
- Job security and sustainable employment.
- Provides important security for Station Control Desks and Control Desk jobs.
- Expansion of incidents to enable members to further access to trauma leave when needed.
- New employee safety clause that provides for joint HSR and Union Delegates involvement in risk assessments following serious incidents.
- Lock in notification provisions for access to Long Service Leave.
- New Sexual harassment and gendered violence clauses.
- Increase Intervals between shifts to 12 hours.
- Increase to Parental leave from 12 weeks to 14 weeks.
- New Community service clause - provides for paid per roster leave for those participating in emergency services leave.
- Ability to job share a full-time role.
- New supplementary labour clause that for the first time provides a first step access to part time members to this type of work.

The above list certainly doesn't cover every detail in the new EBA endorsed by members, however it does indicate how broad a scope of issues the EBA covers.

The current IR laws make negotiating any EA a lawyer's feast and provides management the opportunity to follow other legal avenues outside of the EBA processes to attack our right to strike.

We have seen not only our union impacted by employers seeking to undermine legitimate industrial action, but also the MUA and AWU amongst others have also come under similar attacks.

Our biggest challenge in the months ahead is to ensure the job security for our members and that Metro management abide by their EBA undertakings along with reigniting the campaign to ensure that unfair IR laws are thrown in the dust bin of history.

## Our fight is far from over.

On Friday, 1 May, the Metro EA was lodged with the Fair Work Commission (FWC) for its approval.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and current restrictions in place at the FWC, we are unsure of how long the certification process will take. Once the FWC approves the enterprise agreement, it then comes into effect, including the pay increases (backpaid to 1 July 2019) and new conditions.

## WOMENS MEETING – TELECONFERENCE DETAILS

Our women's meeting will be running via Teleconference at 11am on Wednesday 13 May 2020.

If you would like to attend, please RSVP with your name to [women@rtbuvic.com.au](mailto:women@rtbuvic.com.au)

You will be able to access via your phone or computer. You can select video or audio options. Meeting link information will be emailed to you upon receiving your RSVP.

## RETIRED MEETING – TELECONFERENCE DETAILS

Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Retired Members Meeting set for May will occur as a teleconference.

The meeting will occur on Tuesday 12 May at 12.30pm.

If you would like to attend, please contact Membership Support Officer Caitlin Brown via email at [Caitlin.brown@rtbuvic.com.au](mailto:Caitlin.brown@rtbuvic.com.au) or via phone on 0448 569 178.

### 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**  
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**Workshops Division**  
Secretary: Paul Jumpertz

**Infrastructure, Workshops & Labour Hire**  
Organiser: Bryan Evans

**Industrial Officer**  
Alice Dunn

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/RTBUvic/

**Industrial Officer /**  
**Organiser**  
Vik Sharma





## Bryan Evans & Joe Dennis

Organisers

# V/LINE INFRASTRUCTURE EA UPDATE

V/Line bargaining this round has been far from a typical negotiation. V/Lines core claim, which it held for the first few months of bargaining was simple, remove Roster By Agreement, to enable the company to force members onto night shift, particularly in the S&C Grades. This claim was vehemently rejected by the RTBU and an impasse held for the following months.

V/Line at some point realised they were not going to achieve their utopian world of complete rostering flexibility (we emphasised this since the first meeting) and changed its position, indicating, that it would move away from removing rostering by agreement, and instead, focus strictly on getting more S&C members working rotating shift work. This approach was coupled with a heavy handed pressure campaign on the job, with management threatening S&C members that if they didn't agree to become full rotational shift workers, undertaking 33% night shift they would be all placed strictly on dayshift and their conditions and rate of pay would be stripped back significantly. What was utterly bewildering for the bargaining team however, whilst all this was going on, at the bargaining table V/Line declared that it no longer pursued a shift work rotation at all, with the current roster trial being dead in the water.

This led to what could only be described as sheer frustration. Delegates, Members and potentially V/Line itself had no idea exactly what the V/line claims for the EA were! This made it near impossible to move towards reaching any form of agreement and it's fair to say that the situation has been quite hostile. To make matters worse V/line were yet to agree firmly with any of the RTBU claims which was put together by the RTBU Delegates and bargaining team. During this time V/line Delegates from the RTBU and Professionals Australia met to endorse industrial action. Effectively V/line's revised major claim to "have more people work night shift" is completely contradictory to proposing a 5-2 day shift, and it is completely non-negotiable without talking about required coverage and rosters.

V/line at some point drew the same conclusion and arranged a meeting to provide coverage requirements for S&C to the RTBU which could well form the basis of a productive negotiation. By this stage however the country was already in the grips of the COVID pandemic, so when RTBU Delegates met with V/line on Tuesday 17 April to provide feedback on the proposed roster changes, it was proposed instead that both parties put down their guns and attempt to use this time of uncertainty in both dealing with the current crisis, and putting Delegates

to work to explore whether or not the V/lines proposed coverage requirements could be met. The company agreed to this which is a step in the right direction extending the roster trial and retaining the existing conditions in the meantime.

The RTBU used this time effectively; a concept roster was designed, which V/line confirmed met its coverage requirements and meetings with S&C members held across the state. Although rosters talk is always controversial it was broadly endorsed that we continue bargaining, along with establish a package of conditions to accompany any roster and then vote when the conditions that would apply are clear.

As it is a core RTBU claim that the current extended hours provisions that many S&C Members work under trial now be written into the agreement applying to both Track, Civil and Signals and Communication Members. As you all know - it is important that we stick together, fight together and gain common conditions across all areas of V/Line Infrastructure.

As always if you have any queries or questions please feel free to call one of your Organisers.

**Bryan Evans: 0457 006 739**

**Joe Dennis: 0403 863 869**

## ANNUAL FRANK HYETT AWARD

This year will be the second year running of our annual award in honour of Frank Hyett, to celebrate his contribution to not only the Australian Railways Union, but the entire Union movement.

Frank Hyett was the father of our Industry wide union. It was his work that saw a move away from smaller craft or trade based unions to the formation of a state-wide railways union, The Victorian Railways Union. He went on to lay the foundation for a federated Rail Union bringing unity across the industry throughout the Commonwealth of Australia.

The Frank Hyett award will be awarded annually to one recipient who has made an outstanding and meritorious contribution to our collective. An RTBU member who has time and time again shown their dedication to the Union through hard work, persistence, comradery and leadership.

We have a set of criteria for the award whereby a member can nominate a member, or another person who has made a contribution to our Union which fits the criteria. Self-nominations will not be accepted.

Life Membership remains the highest honour for our Branch of course, but this medallion recognises outstanding leadership, comradery, Union values, etc.

Nominations will be accepted via email to [rtbu@rtbuvic.com.au](mailto:rtbu@rtbuvic.com.au) or posted to the RTBU, Level 2, 365 Queen Street, Melbourne 3000 and addressed to the Branch Secretary Luba Grigorovitch.

Nominations must be received via email or post no later than 5pm Friday 29 May.







**Vik Sharma**  
Industrial Officer /  
Organiser

## CORONA CAPITALISM – PROBE

As Probe members are aware, Probe has stopped giving shifts to its casual workers and has cut down the hours of all part time workers to the minimum contractual hours.

Our Probe members who already work under immense pressure and are covered by the bare minimum conditions are seriously being impacted by this, not only financially but also psychologically.

Last week we wrote to Probe and the Minister of Public Transport to clarify this situation and to ask why Probe had not registered for the \$1,500 JobKeeper subsidy.

Probe has confirmed they are not eligible to register for the JobKeeper subsidy as they do not meet the revenue reduction criteria. This

simply means that despite their revenue not being significantly reduced, they decided to cut workers' hours.

In times, where a multi-million-dollar organisation such as Probe, should be leading the charge of corporate social responsibility, help and support the workers who have helped Probe pocket millions of dollars, they have decided to maximise the profits at the cost of hard-working members.

We understand these are challenging times for everyone. We also understand that the call volumes may have gone down. But these are the times when people should be put before profits.

At this stage, Probe has given a commitment to explore redeployment opportunities for the

affected staff members. We have asked for an urgent meeting with Probe to address these concerns.

It is not good enough that we must continuously fight for our members' basic rights. This is the reason why we need a much stronger Enterprise Agreement for our Probe members, which has much better conditions and higher pay rates.

Rest assured, our fight for better conditions and a better EA continues. We will keep you posted as these matters develop.

In the meantime, if you have any queries, please feel free to contact me on 0413 363 923 or email: vik.sharma@rtbuvic.com.au.

4 WEEKS\*  
**FREE**  
HEALTH INSURANCE

### Special offer for RTBU Members

As an RTBU member, you'll receive these generous additional benefits (on top of our great value health covers):

- 4 weeks\* of free health insurance up to \$900\*\* if you join before 30th June, 2020
- \$150 Woolworths WISH card as a welcome gift
- 5% discount on our health covers (excluding Ambulance-only cover)
- Waiver of ALL 2 and 3 month waiting periods
- Dedicated hotline and website for RTBU members

\*See [www.rthealthfund.com.au/terms-and-conditions/4-weeks-free](http://www.rthealthfund.com.au/terms-and-conditions/4-weeks-free) for more details

\*\*Based on NSW Family with Gold Premium Hospital – Family extension and no Excess plus Premium Extras – Family Extension claiming no Government Rebate.

**1300 782 810**

[join@rthealthfund.com.au](mailto:join@rthealthfund.com.au) | [www.rthealthfund.com.au/rtbu](http://www.rthealthfund.com.au/rtbu)



**rt health**

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