

# RTBU EXPRESS

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

## V/LINE BARGAINING UPDATE



I am pleased to report that we have reached an in-principle agreement in V/Line Operations.

Over the past month negotiations at V/Line have intensified and Delegates have increasingly been called upon to attend the RTBU office to provide insight into the impact of potential clauses and provide direction to the bargaining team.

At the Delegates meeting held on 9 July, V/Line Delegates endorsed the offer put by V/Line subject to V/Line agreeing to more stringent voting practices around the proposed rostering changes. V/Line have since agreed with our claim that a rostering change involving extended ordinary hour shifts will only be implemented over 75% of a work group agrees to the change of roster.

Further to a pay increases of 11% over 4 years and a sign on bonus of \$2,000, some of the improvements in the deal include:

- ❑ Public Holiday Credits: the opportunity to either work a public holiday for 250% penalty rate OR 150% penalty rate plus a day off;
- ❑ The ability to salary sacrifice to purchase additional annual leave (up to 4 weeks);
- ❑ A requirement for V/Line to give 28 days' notice of changes to the master roster;
- ❑ Improvements to the trauma leave clause;
- ❑ Penalties for V/Line if they make mistakes to

your wages and those mistakes are not rectified within 72 hours; and

- ❑ Improvements to parental leave.

Other changes to the agreement include:

- ❑ A new trainee rate for new employees in the station grade which is limited to 3 months (this will not affect current members);
- ❑ An additional clause which would allow for opportunities for local workgroups to agree to work a longer day in return for more days off, by agreement of 75% of the workgroup only.
- ❑ Clarification in the agreement that part-timers can nominate additional days that they are available to work;
- ❑ Ability to vary conductor preparation time, by majority agreement of the local workgroup only.

Other improvements are listed on the V/Line EA Portal: <https://www.rtbuvic.com.au/v-line-ea-2019>. The V/Line EA Portal is a webpage dedicated to V/Line Bargaining and contains information and resources. It is regularly updated and will soon include our plans for worksite visits so that we can talk to you about how the agreement will affect you and your colleagues.

Legally, V/Line must give you a minimum of 7 days to look over the final proposed document before it can be put to a vote. At the request of

a member at the last mass meeting the RTBU has since requested that V/Line give members 14 days to review the final document prior to the vote.

While this EA is currently still subject to drafting, the RTBU will be paying close attention to ensuring final wording of each clause upholds the intent of each clause as agreed in bargaining. As soon as this happens we will inform you.

Ahead of network wide meetings, next week the RTBU is organising to host a Q&A session for members to have any early queries addressed and ensure all items are picked up in the drafting process. If you have any particular questions or wish to clarify something please contact your delegate or email [rtbu@rtbuvic.com.au](mailto:rtbu@rtbuvic.com.au). Based on your queries we will also be circulating an FAQ sheet to help members understand the proposed agreement.

This is a strong outcome in a difficult time and I want to thank the hard work of members, delegates and RTBU bargaining representatives for their work to achieve what we have. I will continue to regularly be out and around V/Line locations across the state, as will your Organisers.

**Luba Grigorovitch**  
- State Secretary







**Darren Galea & Joe Dennis**

Organisers

## MOVING FORWARD IN THE METRO SIGNAL GRADE

Recently the Metro Signal Grade went through a Delegate restructure. Delegate elections are currently being held in signal boxes across the network. These additional Delegates will assist with any further issues that arise specific to their location.

As you may already know, we are currently running monthly delegates meetings for Metro Signals/Metro/Timetables, Schedulers and Rosters jointly. We have also now introduced a bimonthly Delegates meeting specifically for the signal grade, for the Delegates to raise their concerns. Delegates will meet bimonthly in the RTBU Office with Organisers and Metro Managers.

The Delegates also wanted to improve the communication tools used between Delegates

and Organisers. Due to the nature of Signal boxes and their locations, it can be challenging at times to ensure information is spread efficiently. The creation of a trial "WhatsApp" group will be utilised to raise issues and keep each other informed more efficiently and quickly.

There are still several ongoing issues to be resolved. With the support of RTBU members and Delegates these issues will be addressed.

Thank you to all the Delegates for being open to change, making their contribution in establishing, accepting and implementing new practices moving forward. We look forward to working with you all.

**Puffing Billy** | Joe Dennis

COVID 19 has had an inevitable impact on RTBU

members at Puffing Billy. I have been keeping in close contact with the railway and with the main Puffing Billy Delegate, Goran.

Since 23 March, the railway's gates have been closed to visitors due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On two separate occasions staff have been told they have no work and sent home. Puffing Billy have tried to keep staff in meaningful employment but have been given no financial assistance to date. With no revenue stream, it is a concern for our members.

To date no RTBU members have been sent home and are currently continuing to work on the railway as additional work has been found for them to perform. This is great news and proof of benefit of being an RTBU member.



**Vik Sharma**

Industrial Officer / Organiser

## WIDE BARRIERS UPDATE

The pandemic brought a wide range of risks to our frontline staff. One of the major risks was the transmission risk due to interaction with commuters who needed assistance to get out/in through the barriers. To mitigate this risk to our frontline barrier staff, the wide barriers across the network were opened earlier in the pandemic response.

A couple of weeks ago, MTM management decided to close the barriers without any proper consultation or notice. Members across the network raised concerns in relation to closing of the barriers. We demanded the barriers be opened to ensure frontline staff's safety, however, management refused to open them.

We issued a notice of suspected contravention at Flinders Street station for failing to consult with the members on such a safety critical matter. We asked WorkSafe to attend the site immediately and they attended the following morning.

WorkSafe issued an improvement notice to Metro and instructed them to open the barriers at Flinders Street until further controls have been put in place and until WorkSafe is satisfied that the risk has been managed.

WorkSafe attended the site again on Friday 12 June 2020 to review the proposed controls



by Metro and were not satisfied they were adequate. As a result, the barriers at Flinders have remained open.

Some of the proposed controls are installing sanitiser dispensing units near barriers, provision of masks, cleaning review, explore the use of Gate Attendant Control (GAC) etc.

We have received many enquiries about the barriers at other locations across the network. The issue of wide barriers is not limited to Flinders Street. We are advocating for all sites

with wide barriers across the network. Risk at Flinders is not different to any other location. Flinders Street was a model site for us to get WorkSafe's opinion and instructions. Depending on the outcome of WorkSafe, same measures should be out in place at all other locations.

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.



**Vik Sharma**

Industrial Officer / Organiser

## PROBE UPDATE – REDUCTION OF HOURS

Due to the call volumes being down, Probe issued an instruction to all staff members to either reduce their working hours by 35% for the month of June or face a possibility of 'stand downs'.

The RTBU requested for an urgent meeting with Probe to address this critical issue. Probe have

since consulted constructively with the RTBU representatives and it has been negotiated that no employee would face a reduction in their hours. Instead, employees could nominate to access 4 days of annual leave during the month of June. If they did not have enough annual leave accrued, they would be allowed to use personal

leave.

This came as a great relief to our Probe members. This was a significant achievement and would not have been possible without the growing number of RTBU members working on the PTV and MTIA campaigns taking an active interest in their workplace rights.






### NEW BEANIES FOR SALE!

Just in time for winter, both beanies are available in black and navy. Our roll up designs are selling for \$10, and brand new pom pom beanies are selling for \$20. Beanies can be purchased online at [rtbuvic.com.au/store/](http://rtbuvic.com.au/store/), in person or by contact the office on (03) 8630 9100

**POM-POM BEANIES \$20**

Available in black or blue

**BEANIES \$10**

Available in black or blue

### 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



/RTBUvic/

### Industrial Officer /

Organiser

Vik Sharma





# RTBU

The power of Union



Hon. Melissa Horne MP  
Minister for Public Transport  
1 Spring St  
Melbourne VIC 3000

Via email only: [melissa.horne@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:melissa.horne@parliament.vic.gov.au)

18 May 2020

Dear Minister,

I write on behalf of all heavy and light rail & public transport workers across Victoria regarding the next phase of safety concerns and protective measures relating to COVID-19.

Noting the recent announcement made by Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews, and significantly recent comments made by the Prime Minister, recent days have seen an increase in patronage across the network with significant increases expected over the coming weeks.

Since the pandemic broke in Victoria and lockdown measures were put in place, the RTBU has raised a number of concerns with the government which we have worked through constructively resulting in our ability to continue to provide essential services. Reduced passenger numbers have led to lower risks of exposure and better opportunities for social distancing across the network.

Noting the risk of COVID-19 propagation remains across the network, as these passenger numbers begin to increase, additional protective measures will be required to ensure the health and safety of not only our members, but also the community at-large.

In light of recent events, the RTBU has conducted a survey of members regarding their experience of the pandemic at work and what their priority issues were. Notably, different areas of the network prioritised measures differently, however the results show a clear picture of key issues requiring attention into the coming weeks and months.

Items such as the cash handling policy, checking of tickets, cleaning and maximum passenger numbers on platforms and on-board services, along with clear commitments to retain safety measures for staff which currently in place, require attention and clarity to ensure employees can perform their roles with confidence. Additional points requiring attention are the following:

- Confirmation of availability of PPE including the supply of face masks, gloves, sanitiser and disinfectants to our members, along with a robust cleaning regime are of utmost importance moving forward.
- Address the issues of our members being spat on, assaulted or abused and racially vilified.
- Implementation of controls to ensure social distancing across the public transport network including platforms, on board services, entrance and exit points at stations and tram stops etc, including the way local station control desks can support the reinforcement of confidence boosting measures at staffed and unstaffed stations.

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- Clarity regarding how crowding of platforms and trains will be controlled.
- Additional protections for frontline workers including new risk assessments in consultation with the RTBU in light of increased risk of exposure from increasing patronage.

- Staff training for the purposes of both educating the public and supporting commuters in relation to changed practices due to COVID-19.
- A review of procedures to deal with ill passengers and assistance to the elderly and vulnerable during COVID-19.
- Maintenance and evolution of public awareness campaigns relating to safe travel through COVID-19.
- Ongoing monitoring and feedback procedures to enable input from staff.
- An agreed approach to active and productive collaboration from Operators, Government and the RTBU to jointly ensure the best outcomes for commuters and staff alike.

The confidence of staff working, and commuters travelling on public transport, depends heavily upon an intensive cleaning regime taking place regularly and management of passenger numbers. In consideration of this, we are calling on this government to further expand the cleaning regime across the public transport network and commit to maintaining increased cleaning over the coming months. Additional cleaners should be engaged to meet these requirements with all 3 major operators: Metro Trains Melbourne, V/Line and Yarra Trams.

**Is the Government prepared to invest in onboard and around station cleaners for a minimum period of time to provide staff and commuters with security that surfaces on both heavy and light rail are regularly cleaned as passengers board and depart from carriages?**

With these items in mind, we are looking to coordinate a meeting with your office to establish and clarify minimum standards, policies and expectations moving forward into this next COVID phase. Please respond to this letter with suitable times to discuss the next phase of the pandemic.

With your attention, the RTBU remains committed to supporting efforts to protect the community and continue to provide these essential services.

Regards,

Luba Grigorovitch  
Branch Secretary

CC: CEO PTV Jeroen Weimar: [jeroen.weimar@transport.vic.gov.au](mailto:jeroen.weimar@transport.vic.gov.au)  
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## Media Release

The Hon Melissa Horne MP  
Minister for Ports and Freight  
Minister for Public Transport



Tuesday, 16 June 2020

### NEW CLEANING JOBS KEEPING PUBLIC TRANSPORT SAFE

Cleaning on Melbourne's tram network will be intensified, thanks to the Andrews Labor Government's \$500 million Working for Victoria initiative.

More than 300 jobseekers have been hired to sanitise trams over the past few weeks in a major boost to cleaning services on the network.

The workers are carrying out additional cleaning between 7am and 6pm seven days a week – on carriages, in depots and at high-patronage stops across the network. Almost 300 stops will get special attention, with high touch-point areas being cleaned multiple times a day at major stops including Federation Square and Melbourne University.

Crews travelling up and down busy routes like St Kilda Road will be hopping on and off at stops to increase cleaning frequency.

The new jobs are an addition to cleaning roles added to the tram network in March. The government is also installing 270 new hand sanitising stations across the public transport network.

Melbourne's trams already undergo a deep clean before each service, which involves wiping of high-touch areas, handrails and grab straps at the beginning of each run. The new roles will provide additional support on top of current cleaning measures.

Public transport continues to run to normal timetables to ensure those Victorians who need to travel can get where they need to go. Commuters are encouraged to practice good hygiene when travelling, maximise distance between passengers where possible, avoid travelling if unwell and those who can work from home should work from home.

Businesses and workers can register at [vic.gov.au/workingforvictoria](http://vic.gov.au/workingforvictoria).

#### Quotes attributable to Minister for Public Transport Melissa Horne

"Our trams are seeing more cleaning than ever before, and passengers should be assured that we are doing everything we can to keep the network clean."

"I want to thank our hard-working team who are working around the clock cleaning, providing advice to passengers and keeping our transport network moving."

#### Quotes attributable to Minister for Jobs, Innovation and Trade Martin Pakula

"This is creating opportunities for people who have lost their job through no fault of their own and providing a crucial community service into the bargain."

"The work that is being done is one of the reasons that we have been so successful to date in slowing the spread of coronavirus."

Media contact: Kieran Jones 0421 031 900 | [kieran.jones@minstaff.vic.gov.au](mailto:kieran.jones@minstaff.vic.gov.au)

## ADDITIONAL CLEANING ACROSS THE NETWORK

The Victorian Government has announced 300 additional cleaners to cover the public transport network. This comes following pressure from RTBU members and a letter sent last month seeking improvements to standards and safety across the network.

We will continue our push to ensure passengers and staff across the network are safe from harm every day on the network. These cleaners should be a permanent fixture in our public transport services for the benefit of all.

To date what has been confirmed is:

- ❑ Cleaning will be intensified
- ❑ More than 300 jobseekers have been hired across the network
- ❑ Additional cleaning will occur between 7am – 6pm, 7 days a week.
- ❑ 270 new hand sanitising stations are being installed across the PT network.

Members are encouraged to continue keeping us in the loop about the status of cleaning and PPE across the network so we can act to ensure members can work as safely as possible.

### Contact us

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