

# RTBU EXPRESS



The Official Newsletter of the Rail Divisions of the RTBU Victorian Branch  
**VOL 7 | Issue 13 | Tuesday 15 December 2020**



## Luba Grigorovitch

State Secretary

## VICTORIAN BUDGET - WHAT'S IN IT FOR TRANSPORT?

Over recent years, the RTBU has continued to campaign for bigger investments into rail and public transport to support not only the work of members today, but to provide sustainability and stability into the future. This budget grows on some of the earlier commitments sought, whilst committing to new endeavours for the transport sector, this budget puts our industry in a strong position for the years ahead.

### The key items listed in this budget are:

- **\$2.2 billion to get started with preparatory works required for the Suburban Rail Loop**
- **\$2 billion for the first stages of the Geelong Fast Rail recently announced**
- **\$1.483 billion to build 100 next generation trams in Victoria**
- **\$400 million for the Shepparton Rail Line Upgrade Stage 2**
- **\$206 million for the Warrnambool Rail Line Upgrade Stage 2**
- **\$899.2 million for the Waurin Ponds Track Duplication Stage 2**
- **\$187.6 million Regional Rail Sustainability Fund to boost V/Line's infrastructure and rolling stock maintenance and renewals**
- **\$231.4 million allocated to developing additional car parking at stations across the state**
- **\$276.5 million towards Dandenong Corridor Readiness Works**

The \$1.5 billion announcement of 100 trams to be built in Victoria makes large inroads to break with short term piecemeal rolling stock procurement, providing longer term sustainable industry planning. While this is a step forward, the RTBU will be closely monitoring the urgent need to ensure the work is done using a reputable company with reliable labour standards and transparent local content requirements.

While recent budgets have delivered small orders of rolling stock, drip feeding our industry with what should be a clear pipeline of trains and trams required to meet current and future

demands, we are hoping this marks a turning point for rolling stock procurement.

Historically designed, developed, constructed and maintained by state bodies, all learning and experience of new rolling stock fed into an end-to-end system of continued improvement. Victoria needs to take each of these contracts as an opportunity to rebuild this capacity, this resilience, and ensure each employer sets a standard to be met by the rest of industry.

This is the scale of investment we have been campaigning for, this is what our industry has been crying for. Certainty, commitment and long term planning.

While details remain to be seen regarding the design spec of new trams, who and where they are manufactured, procurement officers need to be wary of inherent risks in ballooning out a rolling stock industry where other suppliers are without long-term project pipelines.

With modelling of projected patronage figures available well beyond the budget outlook, the RTBU has long argued for a more coherent and committed pipeline of rolling stock investment to meet future demands and projected retirement of old fleets.

We have been speaking with government over the need to commit beyond the budget cycle and provide certainty to plan across the entire workforce.

We know that the procurement of these trams will be of key interest to ensure the government gets what it pays for.

It has taken good time to get to terms with current industry players and ensure best outcomes for taxpayers and commuters. We will continue to put our views forward and support the process. The RTBU will continue to advocate for the project to be delivered by reputable international companies with a track record of upholding quality and labour standards.

Luba Grigorovitch  
- State Secretary



### Thank you Bob Bassett

Bob Bassett was recently award **"For Service to the Ballarat Trades and Labour Council On behalf of Delegates"** in his position as Immediate Past president from 2011-2020.

Anyone who knows Bob knows he has been a stalwart support and comrade of the RTBU.

In 1984 he started his career on the railways, alongside joining the Australian Rail Ways Union. He became a Guard Section Delegate in 1986 not long after, and then eventually Sub Branch Secretary for the Australian Railways Union.

In 1992, his involvement in Trades Hall Ballarat lead to a Delegate position, while he maintained his involvement throughout the amalgamation of the railways unions into what we now know as the Rail Tram and Bus Union.

From 1998 to 2000 he was Trades Hall Ballarat Assistant Secretary, and following from that, he became the RTBU Operations Divisional Secretary,

From 2009 to 2011 President he was President of Ballarat Trades Hall, and from 2011 to now he has been the Past President of Ballarat Trades Hall.

It would probably be fair to say that being involved in the unions comes as a second nature to Bob.

When asked his favourite Story from his time in the RTBU, Bob was stumped. He noted that there were too many to choose from, and some which probably shouldn't be printed. He has enjoyed all the comrades met along the way, and especially serving 30 PIN notices (and counting) at Ballarat station V/Line.

His favourite memory from Ballarat Trades Hall however came to him pretty quickly, working with Graham Sheerer, stand out orator and union activist.

Thank you Bob for all you have done for this movement.

### Darren Galea

Organiser

**RTBU**  
The power of Union

Operations | Infrastructure | Workshops | Salaried  
[rtbuvic.com.au](http://rtbuvic.com.au) | (03) 8630 9100

Level 2, 365 Queen Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000 [E rtbu@rtbuvic.com.au](mailto:rtbu@rtbuvic.com.au) [F 03 8630 9122](tel:0386309122)





## Victor Moore

Senior Branch Vice-President

# METRO'S RESPONSE TO COVID HOTSPOTS

The RTBU has written to Metro management since early October over concerns relating to the lack of advice over COVID Hotspots on the transport network.

Several articles appeared in the daily papers with lists of train/tram services and stations of where there were reported COVID cases or possible exposure to COVID over a nominated 14 day period.

The list developed by the DHHS was available online and updated daily.

Concerned Members contacted the RTBU about what these reports meant and importantly why they weren't receiving advice from the operators such as Metro about these lists.

The RTBU wrote to Metro management with these concerns and we received a number of replies from management that while acknowledging the members concerns and increased anxiety that the Operators were in contact with the Department of Transport to "improve the flow of information" with the DHHS.

But, critically in the midst of a stage 4 COVID lockdown this important information was not going to where it was needed the most on the operations frontline.

The RTBU position was crystal clear that members at nominated stations and travelling on nominated services needed to be informed of the DHHS website information and that management had a clear responsibility to make this known to our members.

On 14 October, a PIN notice was served on Metro management following an identified COVID risk and possible exposure on identified services and stations in a listing provided by the DHHS. The PIN related to the Craigieburn line but would have impacted across the suburban system.

As a direct result of issuing the PIN, Metro stations management subsequently wrote to all station staff advising them of the DHHS listing of high risk locations and reiterated how to access the website and what actions to follow.

COVID still remains a significant risk to us all and as front line workers in public transport that risk for us is not going to disappear overnight.

That is why the RTBU will continue to keep the pressure on management to ensure that members continue to be fully informed of any COVID related risks.



## Vik Sharma

Industrial Officer/Organiser

# METRO STATIONS



We are dealing with a raft of issues in Metro station land. Since the COVID outbreak in March, station workers have risked their lives and worked hard to keep Victoria moving. Despite their efforts, it has been an uphill battle with Metro to deal with station related issues.

### Vacancies

There are a large number of vacancies around the network which has resulted in serious staff shortage in some areas. This puts extreme unnecessary pressure on all workers. SMs must make last minute roster changes, bring in staff from other areas and sometimes work with less than required numbers. Metro recruitment/higher management is failing to recognise the operational needs of back filling and having full rosters. We will keep working towards having positions back filled.

### Reclassification Dispute

Metro issued letters to workers at one station informing them that their positions would be reclassified from SO2 to SO1. We immediately lodged a dispute invoking the status quo provision stopping this move until the dispute is resolved. We believe if Metro proposes to change the terms of workers' employment, they should bring that claim to bargaining and not in the middle of a pandemic. We have put our foot down and will fight for these workers' rights.

### Recruitment – Internal v External

Not a single person I have spoken to in the station land is happy with the existing recruitment practices. There is no proper training regime, succession planning, career growth opportunities, feedback structure. If you miss out on a job, no one ever tells you why you missed out and what needs to be done for you to be successful next time.

To make things worse, Metro has now started to recruit people in crucial frontline management roles e.g. SM roles from outside the business. This is an absolute disgrace. Our members feel insulted and demeaned. Workers who have been on the job for years are told they are not good enough and we will get someone from outside. Morale and staff satisfaction are all time low at the stations. There are plenty of station workers who are well qualified and trained to take up the management roles when they come up. They deserve them and not an outsider who knows nothing about the job. This must stop. The RTBU condemns this practice and will keep fighting to bring these roles in-house.

If you have any queries or want to have a chat, I am only a phone call away on 0413 363 923 or email: [vik.sharma@rtbuvic.com.au](mailto:vik.sharma@rtbuvic.com.au).

### Contact us

[rtbuvic.com.au](http://rtbuvic.com.au)  
(03) 8630 9100

Level 2, 365 Queen Street,  
Melbourne, VIC 3000

E [rtbu@rtbuvic.com.au](mailto: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

Alice Dunn

### Industrial Officer /

Organiser

Vik Sharma

@rtbuvic /RTBUVic/

