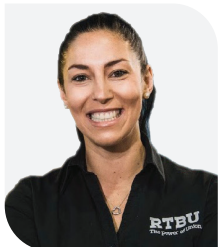


# RTBU EXPRESS

The Official Newsletter of the Rail Divisions of the RTBU Victorian Branch  
**VOL 8 | Issue 10 | Wednesday 20 October 2021**



**Luba Grigorovitch**

State Secretary

## IT'S NEVER OKAY TO ABUSE TRANSPORT STAFF

**The RTBU has continued to lobby for more proactive messaging and funding to address this crisis, we commend the Department of Transport for their engagement with the RTBU in developing stronger language and a committed campaign against abuse to members.**

The pandemic has brought new and endless challenges to public transport workers but amidst lockdown measures and reduced patronage abuse has continued to climb.

Every week the RTBU is informed of new incidents across the network. Every week an RTBU member is exposed to an incident they shouldn't have to tolerate, and every week we must remember that no one deserves this treatment in their line of work!

For years now, month on month, the RTBU has continued to raise these issues with the Victorian government, Department of Transport and each and every operator. Progress has been slow having them recognise the scale of the issue and having them commit the necessary resources to affect change and protect workers, we have made solid incremental progress.

Following advocacy from the RTBU Rail Divisions, the Department of Transport produced and distributed the "We Wear Your Words" campaign. This was a first step in the right direction but given the nature of different incidents there was more to be done. The RTBU has sustained the campaign the ensure your safety to keep this item front and centre.

At the outset of the coronavirus pandemic when abuse figures remained stubbornly high, Rail Divisions officials were quick to reach out and ensure frontline staff were taken into consideration for any public messaging. This resulted in frontline transport staff featuring in the "Thankyou" campaign which put a human face of frontline public transport work in the spotlight.

While the RTBU has been supportive of these more sustained campaign efforts and committed funding to address the issue, we have continued to be critical of the depth of this effort, always asking for more. If abuses are still occurring, more needs to be done. Even one is too many.

Finally recent weeks have showed strong progress - the Department of Transport finally launched the "It's never okay to abuse transport staff" messaging. This begins to get closer to the strength of language and scope of impact such a campaign needs to have - acknowledging that if we are fair dinkum about changing people's attitudes and behaviours, such campaigns need to be sustained over long periods of time.

While this campaign has been on foot for many years, we're just getting started. Our goal is to continue ramping up the campaign with better transparency from operators, sustained and firm public messaging and firmer commitments to supporting staff.

I am continuing to support Rail Divisions officials who work with all operators and DoT to ensure the campaign gets to all locations and is there

to support members. We continue to explore new avenues to address these issues and are currently in discussions with WorkSafe on how we can better improve safety for members and will keep members informed as this develops.

### Support the campaign

- If your location does not have this messaging in place, please let the RTBU know so we can ensure it reaches every corner of the network.
- If you have been involved in an incident, be sure to report it through the company's system and share a copy with RTBU Safety at [safety@rtbuvic.com.au](mailto:safety@rtbuvic.com.au)
- Significant penalties apply for individual perpetrators of abuse - the RTBU is here to support you and can assist you in pursuing these where possible

**Luba Grigorovitch**  
State Secretary

**It's never  
okay to  
abuse  
transport staff** | Fines  
may apply.





## Victor Moore

Senior Branch Vice-President

# METRO STATIONS FIGHT

In what has amounted to a long drawn-out campaign against Metro management's proposed restructure and master rosters, members have seen some recent wins.

For nearly 6 months rosters proposed by Metro management have sought to implement what are referred to as available shifts into the master rosters. Members were concerned that these shifts would enable rostered times and locations to be changed at management's whim and were seen as slap in the face to Station Masters where Metro on one hand would deem particular shifts to be "operational" and on the other hand "administrative".

Confusion, frustration, and angst were prevalent amongst members as they struggled to understand management's rationale for available shifts and these emotions soon turned into anger.

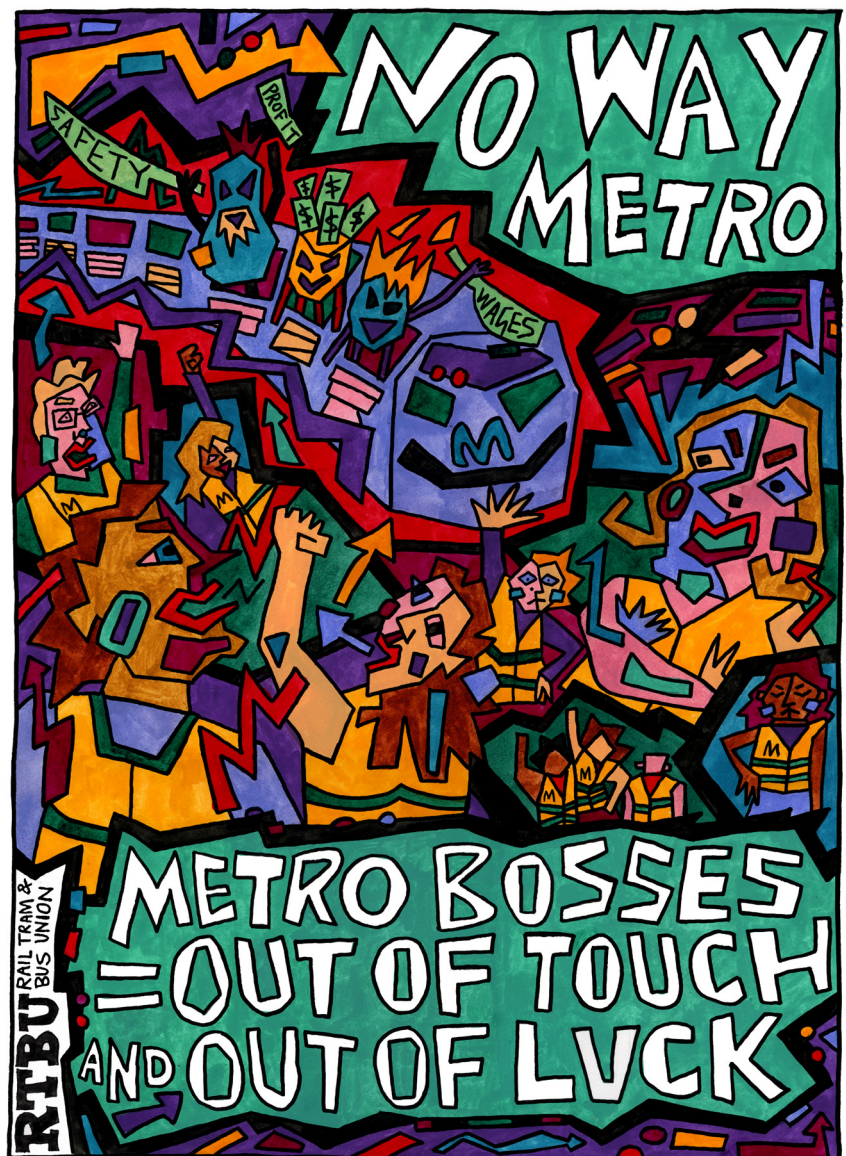
The RTBU in response to these issues notified Metro Trains of a Notification of a Dispute as per the Metro Trains EA and a subsequent meeting was arranged between the parties to seek a resolution before the matter was to be referred to Fair Work Commission.

A key element of the RTBU Dispute Notice focussed on the massive contradiction of roster notification provisions. Under the Metro EA this meant that management's approach to using available shifts based on short notice of rostered time and rostered location for business needs ran into a brick wall. Roster provisions and notification are covered under clause 3.23.

Metro wrote to the RTBU on 6 October advising that "in terms of AV shifts, Metro has genuinely considered the RTBU's concerns. Whilst we maintain the contrary view that the Metro Trains Melbourne Pty Ltd (Rail Operations) Enterprise Agreement 2019 (the Agreement) does not prevent the introduction and operation of available shifts, Metro has decided to remove any reference to AV shifts from the proposed new Master Roster. Metro reached this decision on the basis that it considered it practicable to do so."

This is a great win for Members and it is due to the dedication and willingness to stand united that have seen off the available shifts which many members saw as direct attack on their working conditions and a slide into the rostering relief abyss.

Members and delegates continue to meet regularly online during the week to further discuss and to be kept up to date with developments in the stations campaign with further meetings of rostering working parties consisting of Station Masters, RTBU and Metro due to be held in the coming week.



Artwork created by @nickyminus and commissioned by the RTBU

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**Admin & Salaried Division**  
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**Infrastructure, Workshops  
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Organiser: Bryan Evans  
Organiser: Joe Dennis

**Industrial Officer**  
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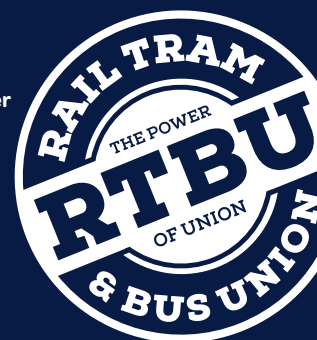
**Branch Divisional Organiser**  
**Admin/Rail Operations**  
Vik Sharma



@rtbuvic



/RTBUVic/





**Joe Dennis**

Organiser

## V/LINE CENTROL AND V/LINE TRACK AND SIGNAL

### Centrol Rapid Antigen Testing

V/Line recently introduced Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) for all who enter the Centrol Train Control premises.

Rapid Antigen Testing is a tool to assist in the detection of COVID-19 in people. It involves a nasal swab and displays a result within 15 minutes.

RTBU Officials, Delegates, HSRs and V/Line were involved in consultation relating to the process involved with the test.

RTBU Representatives raised concerns regarding the amount of time it takes to conduct the test

and then receive a result and as a result V/Line agreed to cover the time required to do the test, prior to the beginning OF each shift.

Rapid Antigen Testing is now being trialled in the Centrol area and consultation with the RTBU will continue.

### V/Line Track and Signal Roster

Both V/Line Track and Signal roster discussions have taken place.

These discussions are only early stages, and we ask all members to ensure V/Line have consulted with all members and the RTBU before agreeing to any rosters.

These rosters for Signals have been an ongoing issue for some time now and at the beginning of the year agreed to trial two 16-week blocks.

The trial has now been completed only for V/Line to now say the trial rosters are not meeting their needs and have instead put forward a straight 7 and 7 roster.

Members have all contacted me and have unanimously rejected any roster with a 33% night shift.



**Darren Galea**

Organiser

## AROUND THE TRAPS

It goes without saying that the past two years have been tough for everyone. The past few months have continued to present new challenges as we adapt to the latest COVID-19 health directions and changing risks on the job.

I want to thank each and every Member who has continued to show up every day to keep the network running during these unprecedented times. You have all shown great strength, and resilience in working through the challenges and putting forward your views in protecting yourselves and your workmates.

I also want to thank all of the RTBU Representatives, Delegates and HSRs from all companies across the network. You have shown tremendous support for all members in these trying times.

Since the beginning of last year, Vik Sharma and myself, with the support of RTBU Representatives, Delegates and HSRs have attended numerous Risk Assessments to ensure job security for workers with safe working conditions at the forefront of all decision making.

Risk Assessments have been utilised to think critically about challenges in different settings and facilitate conversations around safety. This ongoing discussion helps mitigate risks and creates important controls to keep Members safe. These Risk Assessments have been crucial in ensuring our safety response continues to adapt to the changing landscape

In the months ahead, the RTBU will continue to ensure consultation occurs every step of the way, as we make our way out of lockdown.

Everyone should continue to do their utmost to ensure they are following COVID-Safe work plans, and risk assessments and where things might be unclear or require attention please reach out to a representative to ensure your thoughts can be taken into account.

We have plenty of challenges ahead of us, and we will continue to do everything possible to make sure we keep Members secure and safe at work.







**Bryan Evans**  
Industrial Officer / Organiser

## INFRASTRUCTURE/WORKSHOPS EAS SOLID AS EVER DESPITE THE PANDEMIC

Despite the trying times the Pandemic has wrought, the RTBU has been hard at work at the bargaining table laying down solid agreements for infrastructure and workshop members across the state.

### **Coleman rail.**

The Coleman Rail agreement which has been under negotiation for 12 months, was put to the vote last week and overwhelmingly endorsed by a whopping 95% of members. The agreement boasts rail specific construction classifications, extended hours provisions and delivers on average a wage increase over 25% to members over 4 years, bringing them in line with other RTBU infrastructure companies such as John Hollands, Laing O Rourke, and McConnel Dowell.

### **UGL Ballarat**

After negotiations broke down earlier in the year, and industrial action being unanimously supported by members of all unions, UGL quickly got serious about negotiations and a deal was put on the table which was endorsed in-principle by the members. The deal delivers an 11% pay rise fully back paid from the expiry of the previous agreement and will be heading to a vote in the coming weeks.

### **Gemco**

After establishing bonus days (5 additional days of per year) last agreement, the RTBU is proud to announce that it has recently reached an in-principle agreement with Gemco subject to drafting and final vote.

The proposed deal boasts:

13.5% wage increase over 4 years, 36 hour week with 26 RDOs per annum, and rostering protection.

The deal which will go to a vote in the coming weeks puts Gemco miles ahead of results obtained at Newport and Bendigo and sets them as the employer of choice in the rolling stock tier 2 space.

### **Activate Rail & TPA**

After protracted negotiations Active Rail and TPA have come to the party with new agreements.

The enterprise agreement which is the first for Activate Rail, and the first union deal for TPA carries on from the standard established with Programmed Skilled for the safeworking industry. The agreement boasts a 14% wage increase, paid training, and shift cancellation conditions. Both agreements will be heading to a vote in the coming weeks.

### **GTE**

For the first time since 2014 negotiations are underway with GTE. GTE undertake track labour hire works. Members engaged at GTE, many of them reluctant former Skilled employees, have been working for well below the industry rate. Though commencing positively, negotiations have since stalled, due to both COVID circumstances and what appears to be general reluctance. Regardless of the reason, members at GTE have made it clear, enough is enough.

### **ARTC**

Last ARTC EA was hard fought with ARTC going for the throat of all the conditions RTBU members hold dear. After 18 months of industrial action, members protected their hard-fought conditions securing a roll over agreement with a modest pay rise. ARTC negotiations are now due to commence in the coming weeks, after preliminary discussions with the company, they have tried to assure the RTBU that this time around things will be different.

Organisers will be holding members meetings to establish a log of claims in the coming weeks.

## SPEAK TO YOUR WORKMATES TO MAKE SURE YOU'VE ALL GOT YOUR DETAILS UP TO DATE!

The RTBU relies on your contact details and current workplace in order to send you timely and valuable information.

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.

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**

**Please contact us at [rtbu@rtbuvic.com.au](mailto:rtbu@rtbuvic.com.au) to update your details, or by heading to <https://www.rtbu.com.au/update2021/>**

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