

RTBU EXPRESS

The Official Newsletter of the Rail Divisions of the RTBU Victorian Branch
VOL 9 | Issue 11 | Friday 28 October 2022



Vik Sharma
Branch Secretary

REMEMBERING TONY

While we as a union must always be looking forward, we must also never forget the leaders and fighters of our movement that have brought us this far.

Anyone who's been to the RTBU's office on Queen Street may have noticed that our Delegates Room is named after Tony Massaria, a highly respected and hard-working Organiser who tragically lost his life while on the job. His portrait hangs on the wall.

Tony Massaria was a beloved Infrastructure and Workshops Organiser for the RTBU from 2000 to 2006, prior to which he had been an Organiser for the CFMEU.

Tony's life was tragically cut short on Thursday 12 October 2006, when he was killed in an accident in the Tottenham terminal yard. Shortly after dropping a Delegate back to the job, Tony was leaving the yard to return to the union office when his car was struck by a train on a crossing, killing him instantly.

This tragedy was a sobering moment for all in the union movement.

Tony joined the union for the same reasons as many others, to fight for better, safer conditions for workers. It was unjust that Tony would lose his life on the job.

Tony had previously served the Victorian and WA branches of the Builders Labourers Federation (BLF), working under Norm Gallagher, John Cummins and Kevin Reynolds. His industrial and political ideas were forged on the anvil of

the deregistration and derecognition of the BLF in the 1980s, in an effort by governments and bosses to destroy the construction union.

Tony's involvement in this bitter struggle was as a rank-and-file activist, Delegate and Organiser and this experience shaped his views and made him a battle-hardened and fearless unionist. After his innings at the BLF and CFMEU, Tony came aboard the RTBU as an Organiser in 2000.

Despite having come from outside our industry, Tony quickly wrapped his head around all the issues in infrastructure and workshops and how to tackle them strategically.

Tony believed in "going down where the hammers whack" and spending time with our members and delegates on the job.

Tony understood the vital importance of a strong delegate network and would prop up delegates going through hard times and allow fiery up-and-comers plenty of space to make their mark. During his time, he developed a new layer of younger delegates who were schooled in the art of battling with private companies and the growing number of subcontractors and labour hire companies who were emerging in the newly privatised environment post-1998.

With the help of key delegates these companies were unionised, organised, and placed under Collective agreements one by one.

Tony knew the importance of solidarity. He forged and made alliances with other unions combined union shop committees and maintained good

relationships with other unions in and around the industry, while at the same time protecting the interests of our own members and union.

Tony took every problem head on, ensured every new member signed up, and fought until every contractor was nailed in an EA. Everything he did, he did for the good of the union.

Tony's death devastated the RTBU's team of officials, members, delegates and everyone who called him a comrade and friend. The RTBU wrote of Tony at the time, "It's the sum total of all of those things, big and small, that got us back into our own property and back on the road to strength and power. **Tony, you didn't do it on your own, but we couldn't have done it without you.**"

There are lessons Tony's story for us today that we must never forget.

Members must be empowered and know that they're the ones leading their union, Delegates must be given the tools to stand up and make a difference where they work, the betterment of the union must always come first, and above all else, every worker should make it home safe.

We will continue to honour his memory through the work we do, and Tony will never be forgotten. We honour the dead and fight like Hell for the living.

Vik Sharma
Victorian Branch Secretary



Tony Massaria



RTBU and Tony's loved ones meeting for Tony's Memorial Day

RTBU
The power of Union

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David Paton

Organiser

DAVID PATON JOINS THE TEAM

I joined the rail industry in 2007 with Connex Trains as a Part-Time LSA and have since worked as an SO2, SO3 in Loop Stations. Most recently I have served as an RTBU Delegate to Members at Parliament Station.

As Station Staff we are the front line workers who bear the brunt of passenger frustration and aggression. We are the first port of call and shoulder the burden when trains are cancelled, delayed, replaced or disrupted.

During my time on the network I've seen first hand the unacceptable abuse suffered by Station Staff; how work that was once a "job for life" has been undermined by greed; and how automation stands to change our jobs into the future.

I strongly support equity and fairness on the

job including when it comes to merit based promotion and opportunities across our industry.

Like many of us, I've felt the frustration of Metro treating us like mere "employee numbers", an entry in a spreadsheet, roster or payroll database.

I've heard all the excuses of 'fatigue management' and seen the slippery corporate risk assessments that are used as justification to make staff work alone in roles that have traditionally required two and three people.

We are subject to both physical and psychological assault, the demands of shift work and lost weekends, impacting relationships and family. The same people, the essential workers who laboured through the pandemic, offered

counselling, first aid and a smile when all those things were in short supply.

I strongly believe in our union in continuing to push back against this rotten system. Sticking together we will keep fighting as we bounce back from the challenges of the pandemic.

I'm excited to join the current team at the RTBU working to provide the help we should all expect of our union: Someone to respond quickly and listen to concerns, to follow through and always look for the best possible outcome.

Don't hesitate to reach out to me on **0449 720 894** or at **david.paton@rtbuvic.com.au**
I'm here to help!

FINANCIAL ADVICE FOR RTBU MEMBERS

WHY SEEK FINANCIAL ADVICE?

The decisions you make and the actions you take along the way heavily influence your financial future. It pays to make wellconsidered decisions. Working with a knowledgeable financial adviser and experienced lender who takes a genuine interest in helping you improve your financial situation can make a world of difference to the life you create both now and in the long run.

Finding the time to understand everything impacting your financial future can be time consuming and difficult to know what you should do to ensure you are in a better financial situation.

Working with Dreamstreet will give you the benefit of a valuable partnership - receiving your adviser's insights, knowledge and practical ideas whilst remaining in complete control of what happens with your money.

Most members seek financial advice after a significant life event. Changing family situations, increase in earnings, or approaching retirement are just a few key life triggers.

The RTBU has partnered with Dreamstreet to support members in being on the front foot. In challenging economic times, holistic advice is cornerstone to meeting each member's financial needs.

- **Tailored and personal service**
- **Mortgage and lending options**
- **Property evaluation**
- **Investment and super advice**
- **Cashflow and retirement projections**
- **Life insurance**

If you're interested in better understanding your situation and where you are going, or are considering your current mortgage options, call Dreamstreet on 1300 230 240 or email at info@dreamstreet.com.au.



Contact us

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Secretary: Jon Saw

Admin & Salaried Division
Secretary: Steven Kozmevski

Rail Operations Division
Secretary: Darren Galea

Workshops Division
Secretary: Paul Jumpertz

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

Industrial Officer
Amanda Swayn

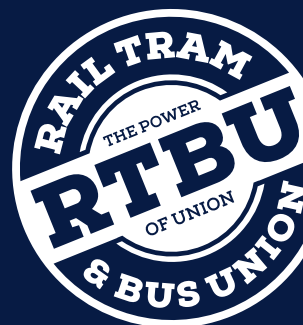
**Operations & Admin
Organiser**
Sally Van Bragt



@rtbuvic



/RTBUVic/





Amanda Swayn

Industrial Officer

FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Over the last 12 months, I have dealt with several disputes on behalf of members in relation to flexible work arrangements or advised members that they should consider putting in a flexible work arrangement request.

This is often an overlooked entitlement, which is a shame, because it can assist people who need temporary assistance and flexibility with their work to manage their work and homelife.

A flexible work arrangement is a temporary agreement between a worker and employer that allows for the conditions of your employment, as set out in your contract, to be modified to accommodate your needs. This can mean reducing your rostered hours, or days of availability, or anything reasonable that is agreed upon with the employer.

For example, I recently assisted a member to be moved to a different work location, so that he could be closer to his family, as he transitioned to retirement.

I advised another member, who works part-time, to put in a flexible work request to prevent her employer from rostering her outside of her available hours, which adversely impacted her childcaring arrangements.

In another instance, I assisted a member who had a very ill family member to obtain a flexible work arrangement so that they could care for them

while they were sick, without the compounding fear of losing his job.

Under the Fair Work Act and our EAs, employees have the right to make a flexible work arrangement request, if they are:

- **A parent or have caring responsibilities for a school aged child or younger**
- **A carer**
- **Have a disability**
- **55 or older**
- **Experiencing family violence or**
- **Providing care and support to a family or household member who is experiencing family violence.**

To be eligible to make a flexible work arrangement request, you need fit into one of the above categories and have been employed continuously for at least 12 months.

An employer is only able to refuse a request on 'reasonable business grounds' and must provide a written response to a request within 21 days of the request being made. This is a broad exclusion; however, the company must specify how these grounds apply to the request. So, a refused request can also be challenged in Fair Work. This is something that the union can assist with. In

my experience, most flexible work arrangement requests have been resolved informally, without having to go to Fair Work.

The union will support any member, who meets the above criteria, to obtain a flexible work arrangement to support a healthy work/life balance. The law understands that managing work responsibilities at certain points in your life can be a challenge and this legal entitlement is meant to provide some temporary supports to help alleviate those acute points of stress.

It's important to support your colleagues and comrades when they make these requests or are already on a flexible work arrangement. These arrangements are in place to support people who need it. They are temporary arrangements for temporary challenges that are designed to be able to give workers some flexibility in times of need.

Making a request is easy. The Fair Work website contains a template letter which can be used to make your initial request. I would recommend getting in touch with your delegate or organiser if you need any assistance making the request. If your request is refused, please contact the union for support.

If you have any questions about flexible work arrangements or think this may assist you, please don't hesitate to reach out.

HUNTERLINK – ONLY A CALL AWAY

Too often employer EAPs are under-resourced and a tick-the-box exercise not fully meeting the needs of members and their families.

Hunterlink was born from the union movement following some great work by or allies in the Maritime and Construction unions meaning they understand worker and union issues. Hunterlink provide professional and tailored support and assistance to members 24/7. **RTBU members can simply pick up the phone.**

If you have an issue and simply need someone to talk to or are facing difficulties and require further support, don't hesitate to pick up the phone.

We work in a challenging environment and life can throw many challenges our way. Knowing members have access to confidential support of a union backed support service is key.



Confidential Help Line

1800 554 654





Darren Galea

Secretary Rail Operations Division

VALE ANTHONY FOWLER

We are devastated to inform members of Anthony Fowler's passing.

Those who knew Anthony will remember him for his generosity, humility, and respect for his co-workers.

Anthony began working for the railways in May 1997 at Camberwell Station. Over his 25 years in the railway industry, he worked as an Authorised Officer at both Hawthorn Depot and Malvern Depot.

Anthony was an outstanding delegate who had the respect and admiration of his fellow workmates. He always worked hard to ensure that Members came first. He was committed to attending monthly Delegate meetings and contribute meaningfully. He was a strong advocate for his fellow Members.

As a Safety Representative, Anthony was dedicated to creating a safer work environment for his fellow Members. He participated in the RTBU Safety campaign, fighting against the abuse of frontline workers on the network. He also helped achieved better working conditions for rail workers by being an active participant in the Metro Enterprise Agreement (EA) negotiations.

His absence will be deeply felt by all who knew him.

Those who worked with Anthony and who were close to him are in our thoughts. Members should be proud of our ability to come together and be there for each other in times of tragedy.

The RTBU sends our deepest sympathies to Anthony's family and loved ones.



Contact us

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