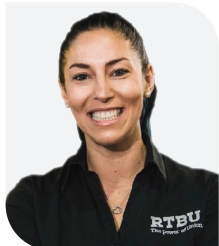


# RTBU EXPRESS

The Official Newsletter of the Rail Divisions of the RTBU Victorian Branch  
**VOL 9 | Issue 4 | Tuesday 26 April 2022**



**Luba Grigorovitch**  
State Secretary

## FAREWELL, BUT NOT GOODBYE

I want to start by thanking members for their ongoing solidarity, support and commitment to the RTBU while I have been the Victorian RTBU State Secretary.

This Friday 22 April is my last day as the Branch Secretary with Vik Sharma to succeed me from this date. I am handing over the reigns after 12 years working for members as I have decided to contest this year's Victorian state election in November as a Labor candidate for the state seat of Kororoit.

Needless to say, while I may be finishing up as a paid official, I will forever remain a proud and active supporter of the RTBU. If I am successful in my run for parliament I will continue to work tirelessly advocating for RTBU members within the government.

It has been the privilege of my lifetime to have served and led our great Union. Having come onboard as an Organiser and Women's Officer until 2014 when I succeeded Trevor Dobbyn as Branch Secretary and I remain deeply indebted to Trevor for his mentorship and unstinting camaraderie during my two terms as Branch Secretary.

### Winning together

Recent years have seen our Union take industrial action across the public transport network. This broke almost two decades without a stoppage as part of two separate bargaining campaign for new enterprise agreements. These battles have been tough and presented no guarantees of delivering what members deserved in the face of deep corporate pockets and oppressive workplace legislation. But thanks to our rank & file solidarity, active Delegates & hard working Officials we have been able to win strong EAs which have baked in solid conditions and strong pay rises. We have never backed down from a challenge and have always taken the fight to the government.

When I reflect on our many wins together I think of our first stoppage in 18 years demanding a fair EA from both Metro and Yarra in 2015. I remember that we were the first blue-collar Union in Victoria to achieve a domestic violence

leave clause in our major EAs and the fact that we have won countless rights for women across the industry such as maternity uniforms and rights for women's advocates.

We have continued to protect long held conditions, gained wage increases well ahead of other industries and delivered job security throughout the pandemic.

We have seen solid wins introducing the 36 hour working week now covering the majority of infrastructure members and now being rolled out in rollingstock workshops. These have been won with no loss of pay.

We've fended off countless forced redundancies to ensure changes in the workplace are made on the terms of our members and with the future of the industry in mind. We have continued to lobby both state and federal governments for our share of funding to ensure our industry is prepared and resourced to provide the services and jobs for the years ahead.

You all know that our industry has been severely tested by the pandemic. Ensuring adequate station staffing in Metro services remains a key challenge in the months and years ahead, as will be forcing Metro, Yarra and V/Line to pay attention and fill the other gaps in public transport staffing and services that COVID has exposed. If any attacks are made on staffing, conditions or rostering, we must not hesitate to fight it off.

### Vik Sharma

Vik Sharma has been appointed by your representatives to fill my vacancy and will contest our Union elections later this year.

Vik is from the job having started as an Authorised Officer with Metro before coming to work with the RTBU as our Industrial Officer and then an Organiser for the Rail Divisions. He is tough, strategic and fearless and he can't be pushed around by anyone.

Vik has always placed our Union and the workers in front of himself, and he is the right person to take the RTBU forward for a new generation. I

urge all members to throw themselves behind him as you have me.

### Final Words

My 8 years at the helm of the Union has made me stronger and earned me more scar tissue than I could have possibly imagined. The RTBU family has always been there for me and has kept me going through some very tough times, both politically and personally. You have taught me more about myself than I could have ever known, and shown me how to lead and serve in a great collective struggle for justice, dignity and respect on the job.

I will always be at the service of our Union's rank and file. Please don't be a stranger to me once I officially depart the RTBU as State Secretary and start my journey into State Parliament.

My thanks are due to the Delegates and members who have always been there for me - you are the backbone of our Union. I'm also incredibly proud of the strong and active RTBU Women's Committee that we have built up, which I know will continue to lift our women members up and nurture outstanding Union activists.

I want you to know that my service to the Union and our movement will continue now in State Parliamentary politics. Although I am officially moving on from the RTBU, I remain committed to continue to serve the struggle in any capacity that I can.

I say to every member reading this, no matter where you work: this Union is yours, everything we've achieved is only thanks to you, and you owe it to yourselves and each-other to stand and fight together for your dignity as workers.

Always remember: If you don't fight, you lose.

I look forward to assisting you and our Union from Spring Street if I am elected into the Andrew's Government in November. I will always be RTBU.

**Luba Grigorovitch**  
State Secretary





**Vik Sharma**

Organiser

## STATION VACANCIES CAMPAIGN – METRO BEGIN TO ACT BUT MUCH MORE TO BE DONE

The 'Staff Our Stations' campaign continues and will continue until we get all the vacancies filled.

Members from across the network and different grades joined the protests last week at Footscray and Clifton Hill Stations.

There are currently around 134 vacancies on the Metro stations' network. This is unacceptable and unsustainable.

Members across the network are frustrated, stressed and anxious. These vacancies are not only affecting their professional lives but their personal lives as well. They are over worked and unable to strike a good work-life balance. The morale is all time low.

What's more, annual leave is being declined because there is no staff to relieve and these vacancies are affecting our members' career progression within stations including depriving part-timers of an opportunity to secure full-time roles.

It appears the pressure of the campaign is working. Metro announced earlier this week that they would be filling 80 LSA vacancies before June 2022 along with several other SO vacancies. That is still way off what the numbers should be.

We wrote to Metro to remind them of their obligations to provide a safe and healthy workplace and to remind them of their obligations under the MR4 contract to staff stations.

'Staff Our Stations' campaign will continue until we get all the vacancies filled and create safe and healthy workplaces for frontline staff.

### RTBU welcomes WorkSafe Occupational Violence Campaign for Transport Workers

Assaults on the network remain a significant risk to staff on the front line with incidents exacerbated by the pandemic. Members have been reporting countless incidents of safety and have expressed their anger on the lack of support from the companies. The RTBU has been actively setting up safety committees across the network to work through the local and network wide safety issues for frontline staff as well as coordinating network wide OHS sessions for members and HSRs.

We have continued to engage with WorkSafe and the Department of Transport to have their Occupational Violence and Aggression campaign be extended to Transport Workers. This has been a drawn out push for more to be done to support and protect front line workers and while it is no silver bullet, it is a giant leap in the right direction.

The campaign materials have now been finalised and one example is included with this article. These materials will now be rolled out across the network in the coming weeks. The RTBU will also assist to distribute materials once they become available.

We welcome the recognition of this important issue and the strong language it deserves. If any member wishes to find out more or be part of the safety campaign, please reach out to your Organiser.



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