

RTBU EXPRESS



The Official Newsletter of the Rail Divisions of the RTBU Victorian Branch
VOL 9 | Issue 6 | Monday 6 June 2022



Vik Sharma

State Secretary

STAFFING THE METRO TUNNEL

With funding allocated to commence the recruitment process for the Metro Tunnel in the recent Victorian Budget, this week the Victorian Government has contacted the RTBU to progress discussions on staffing of this flagship service.

To get to this point, the RTBU has firmly advocated for proper staffing to ensure reliable and safe operation in response to these changes and we are pleased to see commitments sought turning into hard numbers being planned on the job.

The Metro Tunnel will incorporate new technology onto the network including communication-based train control (CBTC) and platform screen doors that will be paving the way for future operational changes making proper staffing, resourcing and training essential to get it right from day one.

The first commitment to 180 additional operational staff has been made this week which will include predominantly station staff, as well as trainers, line and system controllers, signallers and signal maintenance technicians. Further discussions remain outstanding with Metro and the Government to ensure proper coverage and safety measures stemming from a new style of operation.

With a new class of new LSAs now finally ready to hit the network, we are continuing to campaign for and demand further and ongoing recruitment for vacancies across the network. Ensuring vacancies are filled as part of this major network expansion is core work that has been conceded by the industry as an issue requiring resolution.

The service will also require over 100 additional drivers and training and additional recruitments will be performed as part of this work too.

Work has also started on helping passengers navigate the new network, with the development of new network maps and marketing and communications materials to support customer journeys that will be subject to consultation with members.

Tunnel construction is progressing with track set to be laid by RTBU members in the coming weeks. Some 20 of the 65 new high-capacity trains are already running on the network and test trains will start running through the tunnels next year making getting these preparations right more essential than ever.

Vik Sharma

Victorian Branch Secretary





Darren Galea

Organiser

SAFETY WIN AT WAURN PONDS!

In 2018, Members raised the issue of safety as Waurn Ponds with me. I immediately took this up with V/Line engaging HSRs and the Trades Hall OH&S team to work jointly on creating solutions to better the safety at Waurn Ponds.

We ran a risk assessment with RTBU Delegates and HSRs, and from these meetings, the station received additional security cameras which allowed Station Staff to have increased visibility of the station surroundings.

V/Line tried to deprioritise these issues, but Members fought hard to keep safety at Waurn Ponds on the Health and Safety meeting agendas. In May of 2019, the RTBU wrote to the V/Line CEO regarding concerns raised around safety at the station. One of the key safety issues we raised was that there was no internal door for station staff to access the waiting room directly from the booking office.

This was especially an issue in relation to the safety of staff, especially for the closing shift (finishing in early hours of the morning), where staff are exposed to the public by having to walk out onto the platform in order to get into the waiting room and mop the floor.

In June of 2020 after heightened safety risk concerns and a rise in frontline assaults due to the pandemic, we wrote to the Minister for Transport regarding the continual safety issues present at Waurn Ponds.

After the announcement was made regarding an upgrade of Waurn Ponds station in 2020, we pushed for this funding to be concentrated on upgrading the safety of staff at this station.

Due to the RTBU continuing to push and fight for safety at Waurn Ponds, we are very proud to announce that a safety door has been installed at Waurn Ponds Station.



I want to thank RTBU Rank and File Members and RTBU representatives for continuing to fight for safety at work, and a special thank you to RTBU Delegate and HSR Chris MacMahon for the hard work he put into pushing for better safety at Waurn Ponds, and across the south west region.

The fight goes on at Waurn Ponds as we now focus on improving the safety at the station staff car parks. The RTBU representatives and HSRs are currently in consultation with V/Line regarding the staff car parking/security cameras.

The RTBU has always had the strong stance that all our Members deserve to be safe at work. We believe that every step should be taken to put in safeguards to ensure that the potential for assaults on Members is decreased.

If members have safety concerns at work, we encourage you to reach out to your local Delegates and Organiser. Members can contact me at darren.galea@rtbuvic.com.au or **0407 512 494**.

INTRODUCING HUNTERLINK

Recognising the importance of supporting members' mental health and responses to trauma and challenges on the network, the RTBU Victorian Branch has engaged Hunterlink as our dedicated Employee Assistance Provider.

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

Contact us

rtbuvic.com.au
(03) 8630 9100

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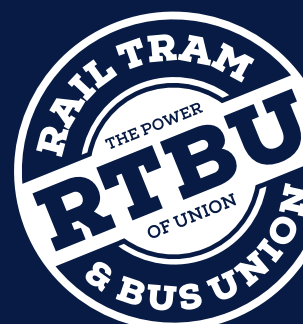
**Operations & Admin
Organiser**
Sally Van Bragt



@rtbuvic



/RTBUvic/





Victor Moore

Senior Branch Vice-President

RTBU DEFENDS RIGHTS IN THE WORKPLACE

The RTBU has pushed on to accomplish further wins for the pay and conditions of Metro front line staff.

The union has now successfully resolved the dispute surrounding payrates for Leading Station Assistants (LSAs). Members informed the union that incorrect pay rates had been applied across this grade including barrier, station host and nightwork duties. Part time and full time LSAs had not been receiving their correct yearly increment increase that is outlined in the Metro Rail Operations Enterprise Agreement (EA) tied to years of service.

The RTBU wrote to Metro to highlight these concerns. The union insisted that the LSAs needed to be put on their correct yearly rates. In addition, it was argued that the LSAs should be audited to ascertain the number of members impacted so that they can be reimbursed.

Metro has since advised the RTBU that affected members will be placed on their correct yearly increment rate and that any payments that are owed will be rightly adjusted. Following this issue, the RTBU has informed members about the applicable rates in greater detail.

We continue to advise members to always check pay slips to ensure that you are receiving the correct amount. Your RTBU Delegate or Organiser can assist you with any queries.

In another matter, the RTBU put in a dispute surrounding the right for members to access carers leave payments. The Metro EA states that members' personal leave or sick leave can be converted into carers leave. This clause is very important because it recognises the need for members to look after family members who suffer from illnesses or other medical complications. The EA provisions are very detailed regarding members' right to access these payments.

Despite this, Metro management attempted to deny members' access to personal leave payments. Instead, they claimed that the members must access their own annual leave or other accrued leave to take time off with flexible work arrangements. This clear violation of the carers leave clause has been very distressing for our members. Some were called into a meeting with Metro to discuss this issue but thankfully they had the foresight to ensure they went in with RTBU representation.

The RTBU settled this problem by issuing a dispute notice. Consequently, Metro agreed to follow the EA by retaining the access to carers leave payments. The clear lesson from this is that we all need to remain vigilant about our rights stated in the Metro EA. Moreover, members should not attend any 'meetings' with Metro management without an RTBU Delegate or Organiser to represent them.

ANNUAL FRANK HYETT AWARD

This year will be the fourth year running of our annual award in honour of Frank Hyett, to celebrate his contribution to not only the Australian Railways Union, but the entire Union movement.

Frank Hyett was the father of our Industry wide union. It was his work that saw a move away from smaller craft or trade based unions to the formation of a state-wide railways union, The Victorian Railways Union. He went on to lay the foundation for

a federated Rail Union bringing unity across the industry throughout the Commonwealth of Australia.

The Frank Hyett award will be awarded annually to one recipient who has made an outstanding and meritorious contribution to our collective. An RTBU member who has time and time again shown their dedication to the Union through hard work, persistence, comradery and leadership.

We have a set of criteria for the award whereby a member can nominate a member, or another person who has made a contribution to our Union which fits the criteria. Self-

nominations will not be accepted.

Life Membership remains the highest honour for our Branch of course, but this medallion recognises outstanding leadership, comradery and Union values.

Nominations will be accepted via email to rtbu@rtbuvic.com.au or posted to the RTBU, Level 2 365 Queen Street, Melbourne 3000 and addressed to the Branch Secretary Vik Sharma

Nominations must be received via email or post no later than Friday 24 June 2022.





Sally Van Bragt
Organiser

OUT & ABOUT!



Members at V/Line have raised concerns over the latest attempt to circumvent proper EA compliant procedures.

In what can only be seen as a display of overreaching tactics and staff intimidation, Members are being told they must submit all sick, carers and bereavement leave forms directly to the CSM on duty.

Previously, all types of leave forms were to be submitted to the Staff Clerks who then forwarded them on as required. This new procedure is an underhanded move to enable management to direct supervisors to conduct "casual meetings" under the guise of welfare checks with staff members returning from any of these three types of leave.

This is not acceptable.

Every member has the right to take sick, carers and bereavement leave and should not be made to feel guilty for doing so. No member should face the anxiety and stress that can come with knowing you're going to be asked any number of questions about why you were away from work.

Your manager does not have the right to question you about your reason for being away from work or the nature of your illness, nor can they contact your doctor to ask them.

Sick, carers and bereavement leave are all entitlements protected for you under the EA and as such it is your right to use them when needed.

After the last two years of being told "don't come to work if you're sick", this latest power play

from management is a sneaky way to try and inadvertently bully staff into coming into work when they are unwell.

I have written to V/Line in the coming days regarding this issue and eagerly await their response.

With Vik Sharma now working hard as our new Branch Secretary, I have had the opportunity to take over the reins of the Eastern Safety Campaign.

It is my intention to continue the good work and progress Vik started in this campaign to ensure safe working conditions for members. Monthly safety meetings are continuing, and I will keep you updated as things develop.

Last week we had the opportunity to take Jake and Janelle from Hunterlink out around the network to meet with members and see what it is you do each and every day to keep our network running. It was fantastic to see the reception they got from Members and we look forward to the next time we can get them out on the network.

For anyone who missed their visit, Hunterlink is a 24/7 union backed EAP provider that offers support for mental health and wellbeing. The RTBU has engaged them to support members in the diverse and challenging circumstances that face many members and families today. You can access the service whenever you need by calling **1800 554 654**. If you simply want more information, don't hesitate to give me a call on **0429 150 306**.



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