

# RTBU EXPRESS

The Official Newsletter of the Rail Divisions of the RTBU Victorian Branch  
**VOL 9 | Issue 7 | Thursday 30 June 2022**



**Vik Sharma**

State Secretary

## FUTURE OF YOUR UNION



Recent weeks has seen your Union liaising with the Australian Electoral Commission to prepare for union elections. Now just around the corner, it is important that we ensure that ballots are fair, follow due process and that every eligible member has a chance to vote.

They say that history is decided by those who show up, those who march and those who vote. This is your union and having your voice cast at the ballot box is more important than ever. Talk to your workmates and ensure you vote for a strong & united union.

While the groundwork has been done, the hard work is just beginning. Recent years of technological disruption have affected the transport workers globally. These technologies and changes have now reached our shores.

Months and years ahead are jam-packed with big ticket items that are critical and we must get them right to secure present and future rail jobs. With the Metro Tunnel opening, unprecedented project work and line upgrades, CBTC, brand new rollingstock being designed and manufactured and other significant technological changes that

will require attentive and detailed negotiations to keep members protected commencing with the 2023 major bargaining round.

We have been on the front foot working with sister unions across the world which are all facing similar changes and sharing their experiences of the attacks and ideas of global multinational employers. We have commissioned research into technologies and advocated for the policy settings for the negotiations that lie ahead.

We have won the argument on the need to properly upgrade, expand and fund our rail system. While significant work lies ahead for the next round of franchise agreements and locking detail on increased staffing levels, your union is in a strong position for the future.

But the work is not done yet and we can't do it without the continued input and efforts from rank & file members.

Without members on the job, being active and taking an interest in campaigns and changes, the fight for better workplaces is only made more difficult.

It is irrefutably the strength of members raising issues on the job and asking the important questions of management that we can put up the fight necessary to ensure the future is on our terms.

For this reason, I take this opportunity to remind members that this is your union and quality leadership is worth voting for.

If any members have any queries about these processes please get in touch, our democracy is always something worth learning and fighting for. We can't do it without you.

I will continue to visit Members across the network and I look forward to hearing from you about your workplace concerns and ideas to make things better.

**Vik Sharma**

Victorian Branch Secretary

## UPDATE YOUR DETAILS

Check your membership is financial and your postal address is up-to-date. Being eligible to vote means a healthy union democracy and every member having the power to ensure the future is in your hands and that you have a strong & stable union to represent your interests.

## CHANGED DETAILS? MOVED HOUSE? CONTACT US TODAY!

Call: 8630 9100 | Email: [support@rtbuvic.com.au](mailto:support@rtbuvic.com.au) | SMS: 0448 569 178





**Bryan Evans**  
Organiser

## JOHN HOLLAND IN PRINCIPLE AGREEMENT REACHED

In what must equate to a new record John Hollands Rail Infrastructure Enterprise Agreement (EA) has reached an in-principle in just 3 meetings - 1 week prior to the expiry of the current EA.

The proposed agreement boasts.

- 20% wage increase over 4 years.
- Increase in Living Away From Home Allowance (LAHA) from \$170 to \$250 per night

- Increase redundancy cap from 21 to 26 weeks
- 4 hour minimum double time payment for the cancellation of weekend overtime.
- The further in-housing of Safe Working members
- Further controls regarding the use of contracted labour.

The John Hollands agreement which signifies the first EA in the Tier 1 contracting bargaining round.

This comprises of John Holland, Laing O'Rourke, Downer EDI, Coleman Rail, & McConnell Dowell, and consolidates the major, transformative gains made in the 2018 bargaining round.

Combined with the 36 hour week (26 RDO's a year), this further cements the Rail Specific Construction classifications.

The agreement is scheduled for drafting on 29 June and will subsequently go to a member vote.



**Amanda Swayn**  
Industrial Officer

## ATTACK ON MEMBER'S CONDITIONS: RIGHT TO SAFE TRANSFER UNDERMINED

One of the last decisions made by Deputy President Mansini of the Fair Work Commission, before she was appointed to the Federal Court by Michaelia Cash, was to allow Metro to slash pregnant workers take home pay, when they have transferred to a 'safe role'.

Pregnant women who are unable to perform their usual role due to the risks it poses to their pregnancy or health have a right to be transferred to a 'safe role'. This right is enshrined in the National Employment Standards and under the Metro Ops EA.

The RTBU's position was that there should be no loss of pay when a worker is transferred into a safe job.

Pregnancy is often a vulnerable time in a woman's life - particularly financially, as most prepare to

take a long period of unpaid parental leave. Those last few pay checks in the lead up to birth are critical sources of income.

Two brave RTBU members initially raised this issue with me when I first started at the union.

Initially, I thought it must have been some administrative error and that once raised, there would be a quick fix and apology for the oversight. In the end, I was shocked to hear Metro's response that in fact, they did not believe these women were legally entitled to maintain their take home pay and conditions, and even more surprised that they preferred to hire expensive lawyers to fight for their position to pay pregnant workers less.

One of the arguments that Metro ran was a very strict black letter legal interpretation of the EA. They argued that because these women had not had their rate of pay changed, the requirement to

maintain their 'full pay and conditions' had been met. This was notwithstanding the fact that one of our members experienced a drop in her take home pay of around \$1000 a month, due to the loss in shifts penalties at her new temporary job!

While we are bitterly disappointed with the Fair Work Commission's decision, this is by no means the end of the RTBU's fight for this entitlement. We do not accept that in this day and age, women should have to experience a drop in their take home, because their job is no longer safe - our members deserve to have their pay and conditions protected!

It is great that the RTBU will be back at the bargaining table with Metro Trains in approximately 6 months' time. We will be fighting hard to ensure that an entitlement to 'no loss of take home pay' is enshrined for pregnant workers transferred into safe jobs.

### Contact us

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Organiser: Bryan Evans  
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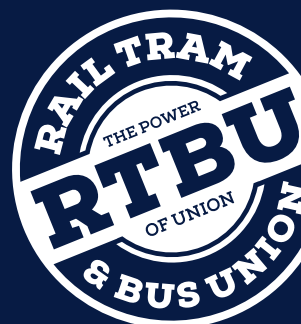
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**Joe Dennis**

Organiser

## OUT AND ABOUT



This month saw the beginning of the Suburban Rail Loop (SRL), the continuation of level crossing removals, I met with members and visited several projects.

The Loop project will create a 90km rail line which will link every major rail line from the Frankston Line to the Werribee Line, all via Melbourne Airport. This project will feature three transport super hubs based at Clayton, Broadmeadows and Sunshine. These superhubs will connect regional services, allowing passengers outside Melbourne the convenience of travel without having to go through the CBD.

The project has been divided in three parts, the SRL North (Box Hill to Melbourne Airport) SRL West (Melbourne airport to Werribee) and SRL East (Cheltenham to Box Hill). With Victoria's population expected to grow over 11 million by

completion, the SLR is vital to both users of our transport network, and the workers of the over 8000 jobs it will create.

In addition to these exciting projects, the level crossing removals are on track to completion with 64 of the planned 85 already finished. The level crossings that are yet to be removed include the Camms Road crossing in Cranbourne, Webster Street in Dandenong, Parkers Road in Parkdale, Warrigal Road in Mentone, Mt Derrimut Road in Deer Park, Cave Hill Road in Lilydale, Dublin Road in Ringwood East, Coolstore Road in Croydon, Keon Parade in Reservoir, Brunt Road in Beaconsfield, Progress Street in Dandenong South, Station Street in Beaconsfield, Station Street in Officer, Webb Street in Narre Warren, Calder Park Drive and Holden Road in Calder Park.

This past month I visited several projects and met with members at prestarts across the state. I visited the Gippsland Line Upgrade (GLU), Shepperton line upgrade (SLU), Bendigo Line Upgrade (BLU) and the Geelong Line upgrade. Next month will be a continuance as I visit Sunbury, Glenroy, Hurstbridge, and Murray basin.

Over the past few weeks members have raised several safety concerns relating to certain projects, which the union will continue to address and fight for. I will carry on working alongside members and other unions to ensure the safest rail worksites and conditions for all rank and file members.

If you have any issues or to arrange a prestart or site visit, call me on 0403 863 869.







## 12% super guarantee by 2025

Small increases equal big benefits

The superannuation guarantee (SG) is the percentage of wages that employers pay into a super fund on behalf of most employees. It's an important part of the superannuation system and adds up to support Australians financially in retirement overtime. From 1 July 2022, the SG rate will be 10.5%.

### 12% SG by 2025

The government legislated a gradual increase in the SG rate with the first increase from 1 July 2021. From this date, the rate will increase slowly by half a percent each year until it reaches 12% SG in 2025. While such a small increase may not sound like much – over time, it could have a big impact on the retirement savings of Australians.

### An increase in SG could mean people won't have to work as long

Slowly increasing the SG to 12% by 2025 means people may not have to work as long to save the same amount for their retirement. Even small increases to the SG will make a big difference in the long run.

### Taking a long-term view helps this generation and the next

Australians are living longer and not having as many children. The ratio of Australians working to those in retirement is expected to reduce into the future<sup>1</sup>.

This means there'll be fewer working people paying taxes to support things like the Government Age Pension, and more people likely to rely on part or all of the age pension in retirement.

The SG increase to 12% will help to take some of the pressure off the broader government budget and the overall economy over time.

### Supporting the rise to 12%

AustralianSuper supports the increase of the SG to 12% by 2025 as legislated by the government. AustralianSuper believe it's needed, affordable and necessary. It aims to positively impact the retirement outcomes of millions of Australians, particularly women and lower income workers, leading to a more comfortable and dignified lifestyle. These are key indicators of a good retirement outcome.

Learn more at: [australiansuper.com/how-increasing-super-guarantee-could-see-big-benefits](https://australiansuper.com/how-increasing-super-guarantee-could-see-big-benefits)



1. Source: 2021 Intergenerational report <https://treasury.gov.au/publication/2021-intergenerational-report>  
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