

RTBU EXPRESS

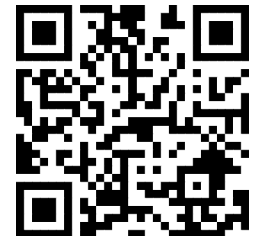
The Official Newsletter of the Rail Divisions of the RTBU Victorian Branch
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Vik Sharma

State Secretary

WAGES VS INFLATION



Scan for survey

With leading economists tipping continued and growing impacts on household budgets, the RTBU will continue to ramp up the fight on wages and conditions.

While the past two decades have seen the RTBU deliver strong wage outcomes well ahead of cost of living, many other industries across Australia have suffered wage stagnation. Leading workplace economists are pointing to a combination of factors such as union strength in campaigning and the rights of workers to take industrial action as major driving forces that make the difference.

Workplaces that have a crack and demand better outcomes, and those that have the opportunity to fight have continued to get ahead. It's our responsibility as workers to demand better and take action to secure a fairer share for everyone. In union there is power.

Results come from our strength on the job and the impact of our strikes and industrial action. When we stick together, we win, and I have every intention of utilising every tool at our disposal to get the job done.

While many industries have faced pay freezes, job cuts and reduction in hours over the pandemic lockdowns, the RTBU has managed to keep public transport running. When many industries have struggled with wage increases, the RTBU has consistently delivered 3.5 or 4%. While we've gotten ahead, now is no time to relax. We have work to do to and ensure we are respected in-line with all other increases.

With continued increases in inflation, and cost of living including mortgage rates, food and fuel prices, I have my sights firmly set on the wages and conditions we must demand as rail & public transport workers.

We have seen RBA Governor Philip Lowe give his strongest signal yet that rates are likely to jump another 2.5% over coming months and Jennifer Westacott (CEO of Business Council Australia – a leading employer representative) has broken ranks with other industry groups and urged that wages keep pace with rising living costs. Clear signs we need to continue demanding the standards in wages and conditions we have established in the past.

With the RTBU's next major public transport enterprise agreement (EA) round commencing early 2023, we're gearing up with claims, research and member feedback to put employers on notice.

I have prepared a survey for the 2023 Public Transport EAs and am keen to get your input. Capturing the views and experiences of members is the reason I am spending each day out on the job meeting and talking with members from the wide range of workplaces we represent across Victoria.

Scan the QR Code above and complete the 3 minute survey. With less than 12 months to go, it's time to get ready to fight.

Vik Sharma
Victorian Branch Secretary

RTBU BOMBER JACKET

The RTBU has a new jacket in store to keep you warm! Head to our website for more details, including a size chart. Preorders will be open for a strictly limited time only, so grab yours before they're gone!

\$80, sizes 2XS - 7XL

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Darren Galea

Rail Operations Division Secretary

WOMEN IN THE RAILWAYS

The RTBU has a proud history of women standing up for the rights of all Members.

RTBU Women repeatedly break barriers in the rail industry.

Over the past ten years, our Women's Advocate network which was created within the Rail Division, has grown to over 50 Advocates across the industry.

We are very happy to announce that for the first time in 35 years, V/Line has employed 3 new women as Shunters.

The RTBU has been advocating for more women to join the railways for a long time, and we're happy to see the major companies finally acting on this. It is especially great to see more women entering the blue collar space which has remained male dominated for too many years.

It's not just about getting women through the door, but it's also important that we focus on retention and on ensuring that women have appropriate facilities within the workplace, and are treated as equals.

As a part of supporting female shunters at Southern Cross, we have pushed for the addition of a new facility to accommodate the introduction of female shunters to the worksite.

V/Line have agreed to fund a new facility so that women don't have to utilise the same toilets and change rooms as the men on site.

We are opening up further Women's Advocate elections across the industry, and if this position sounds like something you or your work mates would be interested in, please reach out to Sally Van Bragt, Caitlin Brown or myself to learn more.



Sally Van Bragt

Organiser

CROSS CLASSIFICATION



V/Line are at it again! This time it's in Bendigo where management have taken it upon themselves to completely ignore the consultation procedure as outlined in the EA and fast track the implementation of conductors being offered overtime shifts to fill vacancies in the stations. Instead of going through a recruitment process and filling the vacant roles on a permanent basis, management have elected to use off duty conductors, as well as conductors who are "available" during their rostered shifts, to perform station officer duties.

Whilst a conductors' PD does state customer service duties, this does not extend to what is currently being expected of them in Bendigo. Management in Bendigo have explicitly listed, in writing, the duties conductors are expected to perform on these overtime shifts and whilst "available" including mopping and cleaning of both customer and staff toilets, litter removal,

emptying of bins and picking up of cigarette butts.

Aside from the lack of consultation, none of the conductors being asked to perform these duties has been trained in the correct handling and use of the chemicals involved in these duties. The risk of injury to members from these chemicals is one your Union is not willing to take, and I am currently speaking with HSR's on the Northern Line about the issue.

Members have spoken very passionately about the long-term plan management has with this move at Bendigo and the fact it may be signalling the pre-cursor to a cross classification push by V/Line in the next EA. Your Union DOES NOT support cross classification. It is clear that this move at Bendigo is merely a thinly veiled attempt to disguise the lack of action on behalf of the company to address the ongoing staff shortages

that are prevalent throughout the entire network.

Members should not be subjected to being V/Line's guinea pigs in the company's attempt to set precedence for cross classification across the different grades, nor should members be expected to complete duties they are not adequately trained in or that are not included in their PD. Remember, this management team spouting the "One V/Line Team" rhetoric, is the same management team that sacrificed a role in the booking office to free up funding for a third Authorised Officer at Bendigo as part of the new AO depot being established. A management team that, when already staffing levels are critically low, got rid of a role completely instead of petitioning the Department of Transport for additional funding for the Authorised Officers.

I have written to V/Line regarding this issue, and I shall keep you updated!

Contact us

rtbuvic.com.au
(03) 8630 9100

Level 2, 365 Queen Street,
Melbourne, VIC 3000

E rtbu@rtbuvic.com.au
F 03 8630 9122

State Secretary

Vik Sharma

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Secretary: Jon Saw

Admin & Salaried Division

Secretary: Steven Kozmevski

Rail Operations Division

Secretary: Darren Galea

Workshops Division

Secretary: Paul Jumpertz

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