

RT&BU LOCOMOTIVE DIVISION

LOCO LINES

Newsletter for Locomotive Enginemmen of the
Rail, Tram & Bus Union – Victoria

EDITION 54 MARCH 2012



Asbestos On Board

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EDITION 54
MARCH 2012

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Publisher

Marc Marotta

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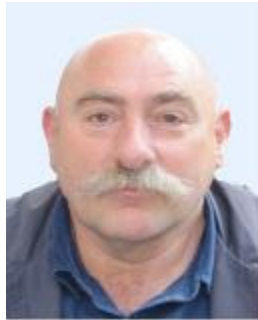
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Marc Marotta — Locomotive Divisional Secretary



Negotiations

Enterprise agreements are front and centre for 2012 as new agreements must be negotiated for V/Line Passenger, Metro Trains Melbourne (M.T.M), Rail Port Enterprise and Queensland Rail.

None of these agreements will be without problems that are peculiar to the enterprise involved. Some involve extended periods on temporary transfer; some involve repairing mistakes made in the past. The challenge for the Union is to try and achieve a pay rise, as even as possible across to the board and agreements that will be supported by the members involved.

One thing I have noticed that is different to my previous experiences is the level of unity within the various division of the Union. Especially in the larger enterprises like Metro Trains and V/Line. Nothing draws disparate groups together like a common enemy.

As I pen this report, dates have been set to commence negotiations with M.T.M and R.P.E, and to be confirmed with V/Line.

Oops



Someone let go the weighted points in Newport Yard. This incident coincided with the Union raising the

issue of these points in the 21st century and that Metro would get better value for Victorian tax payers money if spent less on managers and 'Assistant managers' and more on the basic improvements.



Can you spot the error on the advertisement? It's should read "X"Trapolis love riding rough on tracks" (top)



This incident cost over a million dollars

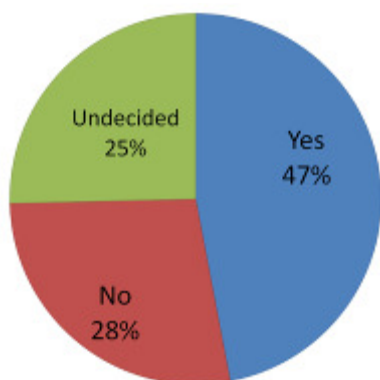
Stony Point Service

At our last Union meeting held at Frankston on the 24th November 2011 the issue of the incorporation of the Stony Point service into the Frankston rosters was raised by members. It was agreed that a survey was to be taken of the affected members.

The survey results would give the Union Executive guidance in what the membership preference was, in how to roster the Stony Point Service. *Cont next page*

I have reproduced a graph of the returned survey results below. *Almost a 2 to 1 vote to incorporate the Stony Point work into the Frankston roster was the outcome*

	Stony Point	Mordialloc	Frankston	Car-rum	To-tal	%
Sent	7	6	20	18	51	
Returned	7	6	13	12	38	
Yes	1	5	9	9	24	47%
No	6	1	4	3	14	28%
Unde-cided	0	0	7	6	13	25%



The V/Line North East Corridor

On 31st Jan 2012 I went to Albury to verify the claims made by Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) to V/Line managers that they had cut back all the foliage and installed Km Posts on the new track and modified the bridges to accommodate driver only operation on the standard gauge. We were also advised that the condition of the track was so improved that speed restrictions could be removed.

I will deal with the foliage claim first. Over the 317km journey no foliage or trees have been cut back and in some locations the foliage makes contact with the Locomotive and train. As for the installed Km posts on the new track; they have installed one KM post every 5kms along the track and the bridges have not been completed.

These changes are essential for introducing Driver Only Operations, due to the shortage of drivers. The only way V/Line can have sufficient drivers to operate the third service is to introduce Driver Only Operations.

In regards to the condition of the track itself; what I can say, as a personal observation, that it is better than what it

was five months ago. Rather than expressing an opinion that could be dismissed as bias or subjective, a statement of fact could sum up the situation.

On arrival at Albury, the drivers brake examination for the return trip revealed that the train had lost 4 brake blocks due to rough tracks on the down journey despite the spring loaded mechanism to hold the brake blocks in position. Unfortunately not all blocks could be replaced because the supply of replacement brake blocks had been exhausted so a bogie had to be isolated impacting on the speed of the return trip.

Senior V/Line management were advised and I believe they were genuinely shocked to the extent that they were misled by ARTC.



Don't get sluggish at tax time.....

AVOID THE MEDICARE LEVY SURCHARGE

Transport Health
Health Insurance by Design

If your single and earn over 80K per annum or a couple/family with a combined income in excess of 160K and you don't have hospital insurance you will pay a Medicare Levy Surcharge of 1% of your taxable income.

Any form of hospital cover will exempt you from the surcharge. So not only will you avoid the extra expense but enjoy the benefits of private insurance-great cover at everyday low rates especially for people working in the transport industry.

So don't pay unnecessary tax next financial year – talk to us today.

1300 806 808
www.transporthealth.com.au

We are moving

As some of you have no doubt heard, our RTBU Locomotive Division office is moving into Level 6, No 1 Elizabeth Street above the old Hostess Pubs. . Please note that we are still in our South Melbourne premises waiting for the new office to be fitted out.. Telephone, fax and email will remain the same so please use these to contact us.

Employment Opportunities

Advertisements for Locomotive Drivers in this State have never been higher at this time of writing. Queensland Rail, Pacific National R&B and V/Line are all advertising positions in Melbourne and some country locations. Pacific National R & B have 8 positions available in Melbourne and have been inundated with applications, 94 from Metro drivers alone!

The high mobility of Locomotive Drivers is unprecedented. Gone are the days when an individual started as a trainee and retired with the same organization. Our members are taking locomotive driver positions in Tasmania, Queensland and Western Australia. I am aware of members also taking positions internationally in mining operations in Africa.

The latest trend is that we are starting to see a trickle of members back to Victoria from Western Australia Rio Tinto, BHP and QR. Reasons vary, some are cashed up and want to return to their home state, some are dissatisfied and wish to return but all that have returned have been readily employed. It is a sign of the times. If you are not happy you have employment options.

They Said It Was Fixed

Below is a horrendous outcome of management's failure to manage and who suffers the consequences? In this case the driver and their family. It undermines management's claims of how much and how deeply

they care about their drivers.

The Budget was provided (courtesy of Victorian Tax Payers) to replace the windscreens in Comeng Trains to a higher standard of glass that prevents the driver from being hit by shards of glass in the cab after a collision. The impact speed in this case was approximately 50kph,

the person that died was of slight build and the impact point was the bottom right hand corner of the driver's side window. The windscreen actually gave way in the area behind the D.D. Unit. Fragments of glass hit the driver and can be seen on the dash in the photo.

What could have happened if the train was travelling at 115kmh is a matter of speculation but what can be said with certainty is that the deceased person would still be deceased and the driver would have suffered injury or worse all because management have not fulfilled their role.

After the driver had submitted to a breath test and all other requirements and was finally home, a family member who had the driver's clothes in the laundry made a gruesome discovery in the shirt pocket. It was a fingernail of the deceased.

If drivers drove the way management managed the drivers would be out of work!



Asbestos on Locomotives

In late 2011 a concerned member advised that at the Newport workshops a T Class Locomotive had been cordoned off with notices warning of asbestos contamination in the Locomotive.

The questions put to me were: *'was I aware of asbestos on these classes of locomotives?'* to which the answer is 'NO' and *'Is it safe for our members to operate these locomotives?'* to which I answer *'I do not know'*.

As a result I contacted the director of Transport Safety Victoria and advised him of deficiencies in the management of these locomotives owned by three Heritage organizations. I have reproduced the correspondence to the director on the right.

Pacific National also owns locomotives that contain asbestos which include 48,80,X,S,T,Y, and H class locomotives. But they do have a program for removal and system safety notices for members which was issued in April 2007.

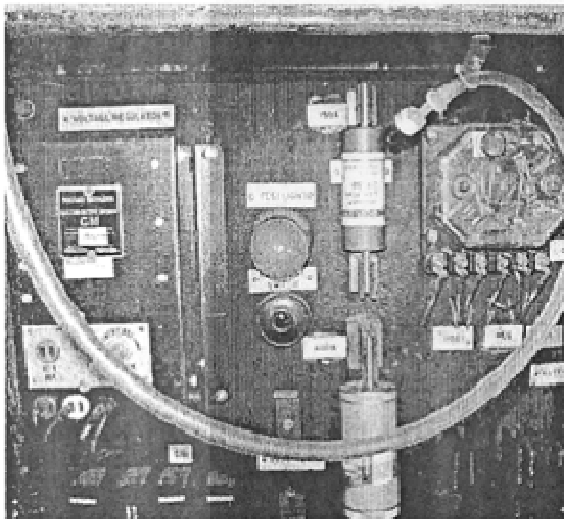
The asbestos is found in the electrical boards and in arc chutes. The description of the type of asbestos is defined as 'bonded material'. Bonded Material is any material that contains asbestos in its make-up. The photos below are where this bonded material is to be found.



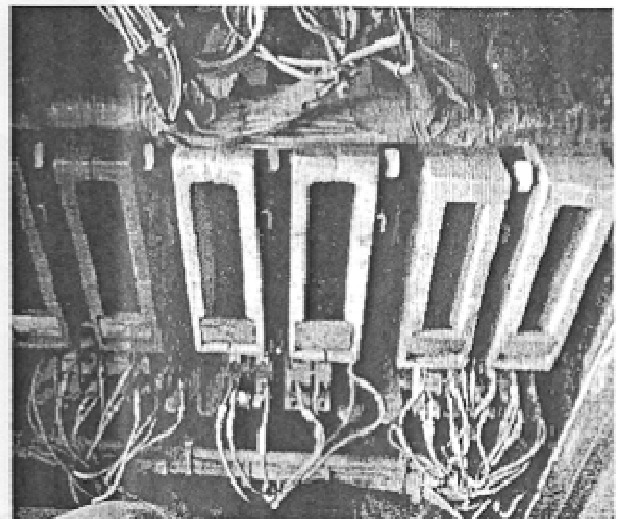
The owners of the locomotives are supposed to maintain an asbestos register and clearly label the affected material.

Work Safe inspectors have made a number of inspections and have employed someone who's known as a 'work hygienist' to assess the situation. Discussions with Work Safe indicates they're preference is to look for replacement material to be installed. This is in line with Pacific National who have developed a program to remove all asbestos material.

At the time of writing this article Work Safe had not made any determinations but is imminent. I wish to thank the member who was diligent enough to bring this matter to the Locomotive Division's attention.



Cabin fuse & battery knife switch backing board in a Y class locomotive



Engine room arc chute in an X class Locomotive. The black coloured arc chutes to the left were found to contain bonded asbestos.



RAIL, TRAM & BUS UNION VICTORIA

LOCOMOTIVE DIVISION

Ref: 19252

Mr. Chris McKeown
Director, Rail Safety
Transport Safety Victoria
PO Box 2797
Melbourne VIC 3001

28th November 2011

Re: Asbestos in Locomotives

Dear Mr McKeown,

I write to confirm our conversation on the 25th November 2011 regarding asbestos in locomotives that are owned by a number of rail heritage organisations, namely Seymour Rail Heritage Centre, Steam Rail and 707 Operations. These organisations own ten locomotives that continue to have asbestos material in them.

The issue is that these locomotives are sub leased to commercial operations, they are not labelled and after discussions with the leasers of the locomotives they were unaware of the situation and Locomotive Division members are unaware of the risk.

It is noted that a public transport safety alert advice was issued on the 3rd of May 2007 signed by yourself. I have been advised that new operators have come into operation since the advice notice was issued in 2007, and they are unaware of the situation. I confirm your advice that I should call in work safe to resolve the matter and ensure all parties are made aware of their responsibilities for future management.

Do you wish to be advised of the outcome?

Yours Sincerely

Marc Marotta
Divisional Secretary

Have you been exposed to **Asbestos?**

Locomotive engineers have long had to contend with the hidden threat of asbestos in the workplace. Historically, pipes in steam engines were insulated with asbestos. RTBU members who spent part of their working life on steam trains may have been exposed to asbestos from vibrations within the cabin. Diesel engines also contained asbestos, as it was used for sound insulation as well as a binding component in electrical cabinets.

“Maurice Blackburn represented a mesothelioma sufferer...he was awarded the highest pain and suffering damages ever recorded in Victoria.”

The Blue Harris trains, operational in the Melbourne metropolitan area from the mid 1950s to the early 1980s, had internal parts encased with asbestos to act as a fire retardant. Many asbestos related casualties have been attributed to either building, maintaining or working on these trains. Members who serviced and maintained these trains at the Jolimont workshop may have been exposed to asbestos.

More recently Comeng Trains and Hitachi Silver Trains have also been found to also contain Hardie-Ferodo asbestos brake blocks which can pose a threat to workers performing maintenance.

Sadly there is no safe level of asbestos exposure.

There are a range of diseases caused by asbestos including mesothelioma, a cancer caused only by exposure to asbestos, lung cancer, asbestosis, asbestos related pleural disease and pleural plaques. All but pleural plaques are compensable in Victoria.

Generally these conditions occur at least thirty to fifty years after exposure to asbestos. Therefore for older drivers and for people who have retired from the Railways the threat of developing an asbestos related disease remains a potential concern.

Should you feel you are suffering any difficulty in breathing and recall working with asbestos, it is well worth asking

your GP to refer you to a respiratory physician to assess your condition.

Maurice Blackburn has a long history of representing people with asbestos related diseases. In fact in 2011, Maurice Blackburn represented a mesothelioma sufferer in the first case to run to verdict in Victoria since 1998. He was awarded the highest pain and suffering damages ever recorded in Victoria.

We recommend that if you have been exposed to asbestos as part of your work in the locomotive industry, you should register your exposure on Maurice Blackburn's National Asbestos Database. Listing the details of your asbestos exposure on Maurice Blackburn's National Asbestos Register may assist if you are unfortunate enough to be diagnosed with an asbestos related condition in the future.

Also, by registering this information, you may assist others by identifying locations of exposure. It may help identify a source of exposure that is missing from someone's history and that might help them make a claim. Register your exposure at mauriceblackburn.com.au or contact Maurice Blackburn for further details.

Should you have any questions or queries please don't hesitate to contact Jane McDermott on (03) 9605 2729 to discuss your concerns.



Maurice Blackburn National Asbestos Register

Complete this form to register your asbestos exposure or register online at mauriceblackburn.com.au

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss Surname		Given names	Date of birth
<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Number	Street	Suburb	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Postcode	State	Email address	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Telephone – home		Mobile	
<input type="text"/>		<input type="text"/>	

Please tick where you were exposed to asbestos

☐ Home (please describe) ☐ Work (see below) ☐ Other (if other please describe)

If exposed at work, please complete table below

Years of exposure eg: 1964 – 1967	Name of employer eg: Gas & Fuel
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

Job title eg: Plumber	Sites exposed eg: Collins/Wales House
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5

Exposure description eg: Removing lagging
1
2
3
4
5

In which state or country were you exposed? Have you been diagnosed with an asbestos disease?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, please indicate which disease:

Mesothelioma Lung cancer Asbestosis Pleural plaques Other (please name)

If possible, provide the names of two people who can confirm your exposure:

1
2

How did you find out about the Maurice Blackburn Asbestos Register?

Newspaper Union Friend General reputation Other (please specify)

**Send completed form
by mail or fax to:**
Maurice Blackburn
Level 10, 456 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
F (03) 9258 9600

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Blackburn**
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Since 1919

We fight for fair

Suicides, Near Misses and Recovering from the Experience.

In my experience drivers react differently to the trauma of a suicide or near miss, depending on the individuals make up and previous driving experiences and what is occurring in the individual's life at the time.

The highest frequency of suicides involving trains in Victoria is the Metropolitan system, by virtue of the size and the number of trains. There are over 800 metropolitan train drivers but on average every train driver can expect to have a suicide/fatality during their career and numerous near misses.

The reactions can include inability to sleep, feelings of anxiety, isolation and/or difficulties in family interaction to name a few. In most cases drivers recover although some are never the same. Some unfortunate individuals spiral into profound depression which can manifest itself in alcohol abuse or other substance abuse. This is where sensitive and compassionate managers have a role.

If managed properly these individuals could recover to be again productive employees, but unfortunately that is not the experience at Metro where too many managers are busy currying favor from their superiors and trying to apply Metro Policies literally. They readily resort to threats of stand downs and attempt to bully individuals in trying to have them fill in this or that form; but when challenged Metro claim it's because they care about the welfare of the individuals involved.

Recently one case involved a driver who was summoned for a meeting with Metro management regarding taking sick leave with a medical certificate. The Driver attended with union representation and it was obvious that Metro was trying to apply pressure to this individual to limit or cease taking time off.

During the course of the interview it was revealed that the Driver was being treated for depression because of fatalities and near misses that occurred over the previous 5 years. The experience of the interview had taken its toll on this Driver, after which the Driver went to seek medical attention and was prescribed medication and two days off duty, the medical certificate was submitted.

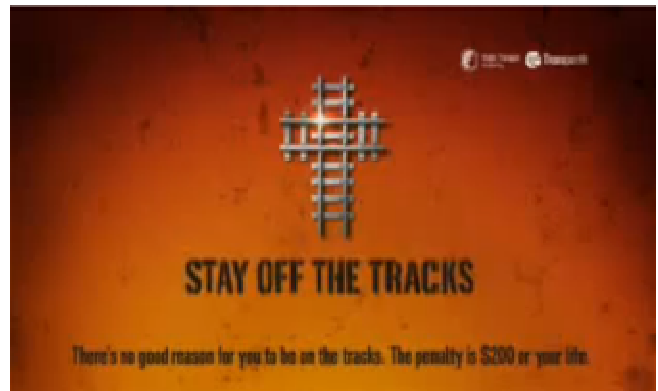
What the sensitive Metro manager did was to stand down the Driver until the Driver submitted to another interview for absenteeism. This was challenged by the union and the matter was soon rectified.

I must stress that other Rail enterprises in Victoria don't employ this approach; in general they treat drivers well when dealing with these sorts of incidents. Metro is the stand out in the way they treat their drivers under these circumstances.

Other transit authorities are proactive in public awareness campaigns. Western Australia has a no nonsense campaign to make people aware of what happens to individuals and families after a terrible incident involving trains.

I have reproduced an example of that campaign below and more information can be seen on YouTube at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/PTAWARightTrack/videos>

I am not sure that there's one solution to the problem and its affects, but I am sure that bullying drivers or making light of near miss experiences is not the answer



Marc Marotta.

Divisional Secretary

President's Paragraphs

by Terry Sheedy
Divisional President



Spin Equals Lies

Politicians, Company Spokespersons and Managers according to the Media, are putting a spin on their statements and stories, which we all know is a lot of hog-wash as 99% of what is stated are blatant lies, hoping that the public are gullible enough to believe them, Mr. Ballyhoo is a prime offender. Look what's being said about nurses and train drivers.

A good example was a few weeks ago when Metro Trains Melbourne yet again attacked its drivers for Metro's poor performance by stating that 16 drivers had gone off sick and 9 were on annual leave. The truth is that 16 drivers off sick is about normal and is equal to about 1-2% of the workforce and 10% of drivers on rostered annual leave would equate to 90 drivers. The Spokesperson also forgot to mention the 65 drivers who were working on their 'Rostered Day Off'.

I detest Liars, it must come from my good mick upbringing. You see liars eventually get caught out as they forget what lies they have spun in the past and become confused and continue on with the further lies which in the modern world is known as spin. If you tell the truth you never forget the facts and accuracy is a great thing for the memory when recalling an issue.

The Workplace Bullying Continues:

The workplace bullying continues for members employed by Metro Trains Melbourne and I believe it's time we took the issue to Fair Work Australia. Members are being hauled in for interviews if they take time off on sick leave even when a medical certificate is produced, now workcover managers are demanding incident reports within 48 hours or your workcover claim cannot be processed (more untruths). Members are advised to fill out a Workcover claim form together with a certificate of capacity ASAP or else, and submit them to the correspondence box in the roster section, it's important to make copies if all papers submitted as they have a habit of getting lost between level one and two.

Members are strongly advised not to attend any interview alone and ask for representation by a Union Official which is your right. The latest tactic by these new managers is to threaten members with "are you disobeying a lawful instruction from a manager" when they are informed by the member that they will attend an interview or complete a report when they are represented by a Union Official.

Case 1:

A member receives 8 stitches in the head after accident under

the train retrieving company mobile phone (Safety Critical Communication) that was dropped while putting a wheelchair onto the train, the driver was taken to Maroondah Hospital by Ambulance. Two days later the member received a phone call from a Manager, not his Manager, requesting he call him back regarding his accident. Foolishly the member called back and was informed that he wanted an incident report on his desk tomorrow so that the workcover claim could proceed (more lies). This bully didn't even ask after the members health or well being.

When the member said he would provide a report in a couple of days, he was threatened with the statement of "you are disobeying a lawful instruction..." the member then hung up on the caller.

I heard all these threats on the phone as it had taken place in my car whilst I was driving and the member was a passenger. Paris Jolly then complained to the Central Manager, Peter Byrne, regarding the Managers attitude and threats. Peter Byrne then spoke to the bully Manager who denied any threat and said he certainly asked after the Drivers welfare when he left the first message on the phone. Lies, Lies and more Lies and some of the proof is in the phone message as it is still stored in the members phone.

Case 2:

Trip to Craigieburn by O.J.T's to be trained in the operation of the new train washing plant so they can train the appropriate drivers at Craigieburn and Broadmeadows. The plant was not operational as a list of outstanding items hadn't been completed, so the O.J.T's wouldn't sign off as being competent in the washplant. Sub-divisional Secretary Paris Jolly was also in attendance during this exercise and was informed by the O.J.T's that they wouldn't be signing off as being competent.

Later that evening this Bullying Manager rang Paris Jolly at home and was screaming down the phone that he, Paris, was inciting industrial action.

We now learn that this Manager is leaving M.T.M on the 23/3/2012. We can only hope a few more of these bullies follow suit.

Off The Job:

On a brighter note, I had two big social events on the 4th and 11th of February. The first was the marriage of two suburban train drivers at Barwon Heads and later a casual and enjoyable reception at the Ocean Grove Golf Club. The Bride, Purdy Malchholm, and Groom, Craig Sheedy, scrubbed up pretty well and made a lovely couple. Approximately 85 guests were present including a few thirsty fellow drivers that partied on into the small hours of the morning.

Congratulations Craig and Purdy and may the future be all happy and healthy.

The 11th February saw the Annual event of Off The Rails motorcycle committee's fund raising and motorcycle ride through country Victoria. I only attended the after ride function (due to work commitments) at the home of Geoff and Bronwen De Pomeroy at Belbrae.

With the backyard occupied by caravans, tents and motorcycles, a 3 piece band and plenty of refreshments, a great fundraising night was had by all and the credit must go to Geoff and Bronwen and the great hardworking committee.

See how life is a lot happier when you are not at work. That is why I am going on Annual Leave from 26 February to 1st April 2012.

Assistant Secretary

Jim Chrysostomou
Divisional Ass. Secretary



Metro shuffle...

It has become apparent, that due to budgetary constraints, Metro Trains has discovered that there is a surplus of managers, supervisors, human resource personnel etc, etc... Some may have been initially confused by the Chinese military approach to management philosophy that for every employee there will be two managers. Is it poetic justice that those who participated in strong arm tactics in trying to implement long term change in the short term will suffer the same fate as those that were before them or is it merely a sign of an organisation struggling to find direction but who am I to question those with international experience because after all a railways is a railways is a railways.

Rostering Initiatives...

The next rostering changes are scheduled for April 22nd 2012, with changes mainly to weekend services (10 minute services to Dandenong, Ringwood and Frankston) and they will comply with the current Roster Code rules. The increase in weekend services will come at the cost of approximately an additional 60 shifts for the weekend.

Update – The Federal Court application in relations to the Roster Code has a scheduled mediation between the parties (RTBU Locomotive Division and Metro Trains) on the 21st of March in attempt to resolve the dispute prior to any court proceeding commencing.

Fair Work Australia (FWA)...

The decision that was handed down for a 3 month suspension to the Divisional Secretary's right of entry permit comes to an end next month with little to no impact to Union business. His Honour Deputy President Ives handed down his findings based on *balance of probabilities* and not beyond reasonable doubt; prior to retiring from the bench after 10 years. We wish him all the best on balance of probabilities with his future endeavors.

Fault Management Protocol A.K.A. Train Operating Standards (TOS)...

Since the Train Operating Standards were introduced Metro Trains have interviewed a number of Drivers in relation to the upgrading of faults, for example upgrading a defective Air Conditioner on a train preparation to Critical on a 37°C afternoon because the saloon interior was extremely hot, apparently this Driver failed to take the advice from the Principal Driver who assessed the situation from a remote location in his air conditioned office.

Currently Metro has been issued a notice of dispute in accordance with the collective agreement because of circumstances that led to a Driver booking a fault as prescribed by the TOS. Three carriages (one train unit) had no CCTV or Passenger Emergency Intercoms (PEI's), by Metro's standard if it identified on a preparation that the PEI's are inoperative the train does not enter service – Critical, taking into consideration that in the Drivers prep we do not test the PEI's, but in revenue when PEI's are identified as inoperative the category is Serious Priority i.e. can be shunted out as soon as is when is reasonably practical.

Let's summarise, without passengers the standard dictates a category of Critical but with passengers the Standard dictates it will shunt out of revenue when ever. Furthermore the Standard dictates that a minimum of one PEI will be operation per car...who's confused?

Train Preparation + PEI's inoperative = Critical (Train does not enter service)

Revenue running + PEI's inoperative = Serious Priority (Train remains in service)

Maybe this equation may clear things up;

Without passengers + PEI's inoperative = Critical (Train does not enter service)

With passengers + PEI's inoperative = Serious Priority (Train remains in service)

This ain't the Da Vinci code but there is a problem when a Driver books a fault and errs on the side of safety and then gets persecuted for this and ends up with a Final Warning, hence part of the basis for a notification of dispute.

UPDATE – FMP/TOS DISPUTE...

Metro deems that the disputed procedure that they are legally bound to follow does not cover this dispute, unfortunately Metro discretion does not apply in these circumstances and because I am a reasonable fellow some may say Gentlemen Jim, another attempt to allow Metro to reconsider their position and fulfill the obligations they are legally bound to follow before we end up back to that all too familiar place again – Fair Work Australia Tribunal.

Metro want you...

First it was the work for free mentor program and now it is Metro depot managers who elect you as the company preferred Driver representatives, do you feel special? Apparently the membership got it wrong when they elected Union Officials, delegates, health and safety representatives, committees etc, etc... So in order to write these wrongs the Metro selection panel is seeking out like minded individuals to represent the Driving Grade on a whole range of issues. I will miss some of these managers when they are no longer with us when we lose them through attrition, restructure after restructure or when someone at the old people's home realises that they have left the gate open.

John Marotta— Divisional Vice President and Wayne Hicks— RTBU V/Line Passenger



New Year New Beginnings

It's been a busy start to the New Year with things going on around the job from new trainees starting, transferring Drivers from the electric running Depot, re-tread Drivers from Freight Companies and retiring Drivers leaving.

There are also new faces from all the grades, Shunters, Connie's, Yard Masters, Maintenance People, Cleaners and also Head Office. We now have the new wash plant at south Dynon, shifting crew accommodation at Southern Cross with a new Drivers Manger to boot! And the re- introduction of Two Melbourne to Albury broad gauge passes transferred to the standard gauge with one service to follow perhaps in the next Month or so, this is where the push comes from management for Driver only on the standard gauge.

New standard gauge stabling facilities at south Dynon are completed and also the Ballarat Drivers Relocated to Ballarat East with the new upgraded fuel point and stabling roads and new workshop commissioned, which attracted two extra Driver position.

New Projects in the pipe line are Traralgon stabling sidings extensions, New V/locity Fuel point and New Bendigo stabling sidings, where S.S.R were situated.

A number of drivers at V/Line have had some ill health; to those concerned a speedy recovery.

Long Trains Short Platforms

With long trains on the Bendigo corridor and doors being isolated, agreement has been reached to revert to OPWI073 "stopping over-length trains at short platforms".

Fatigue

The National Transport Commission (NTC) have been given the task of establishing a national regulator. A consultation forum held this month, in which the RTBU Locomotive Division attended, examined the consultation process on fatigue management, and

some of the things that are being put forward for legislation are:

9 hours DOO on suburban trains,
10 hours interurban and freight trains DOO,
7 hours break on rest,
16 hour shifts and this does not include driving a motor vehicle as part of the shift.

This type of legislation is driven by the rail bosses, and not to the betterment of engineman.

If you would like to view the web site go to www.ntc.gov.au.

Certificate 4

The Skills Council, who are acting under the behalf of the federal government, are endeavouring to diminish train drivers competencies from the current certificate 4 to certificate 3. Last year all Locomotive Divisional representatives had agreed that certificate 4 will be maintained and this was put to the Skills Council. This year a follow up meeting has taken place and after lengthy debates it was agreed that certificate 4 will be maintained.

DOO

With the arrival yards now closed for a period of 18 months, the push pulls will be housed at South Dynon. All DOO locomotive movements to South Dynon maybe DOO, but once you exit the fuel point locomotives must be two person operations through the blocking shed and wash and back to the departure roads and then depart South Dynon DOO.

Should you require to Marshall Locomotives this may be done in the bottom 5 or 6 roads two person operations.

V/locity's will not be stabled at South Dynon and will be stabled at the storage yards once works have been completed, anticipated by the end of the month.

Metropolitan News

By Geoff Ralph
Vice President Metropolitan
Sub Divisional Committee

I hope everyone had a safe and prosperous festive season. 2012 is the year of the collective agreements. First off the blocks will be the one with Metro (MTM), followed by Yarra Trams and V/Line Passenger. The bargaining period starts on the 1st of July. At the time of writing this article negotiations have not commenced!

CERTIFICATE 4 IN TRAIN DRIVING

On the 31st of January Wayne Hicks and myself travelled to Sydney for two day conference on the new national accreditation guidelines for Cert 4 in train driving. Previous to our trip we were provided with a review document. No where in this document did it mention driving general freight or passenger trains (Electric/Diesel). Day one started on page one and finished on page one. Hours of putting our case forward ensued with the support of all the delegates from the other states. Once again, as in the Canberra conference we successfully argued that all train drivers in Australia should have the minimum of Cert 4 qualifications. Day two was very productive. We commenced rewriting with more meetings to follow.

SIGNAL SIGHTING / SPAD COMMITTEE

Drivers would have noticed the increase in vegetation both beside and on the track. Many signals on all lines now have signal sighting issues due to Metro's inability to keep up with seasonal maintenance. This issue has also been raised through the OHS committees. Metro's response has been to send Driver Crew Managers on their day off armed with either a pair of shears, or a saw attached to a broom handle to cut back vegetation. No safe-working protection and I doubt the individuals have track awareness certificates. This ongoing problem will be pursued through the OHS committees and signal sighting committees.

DRIVER TRAINING

Metro recently have had a consultant travel the system for two weeks to review the minimum level of training they have to provide. When Metro first took over the Metropolitan operations they employed private English firm called Halcrow to review their operations. All they want is to half the driver training scheme so they can just keep churning out drivers at a rate of half the cost. All this exercise is about is reducing costs. Not about providing quality training and ensuring Driver's are competent to work safely in the system. The RTBU will vigorously fight any reductions in standards.

FMP and Rosters

Metro have recently introduced a new FMP which has seen train availability fall not improve. Also we have had a roster change which has removed most of the available time off the shift and next to no make-up time to allow for late running and system failures. The end result sees drivers out of position for their next run and Metro's on time punctuality fall? I wonder when we will get the blame for this in the media.

Thank you for all your support in the latest election. I have been elected Assistant National Secretary Locomotive Division and look forward to continued cooperation and support with our national office.

Service History for a retirement pass

Train crews that worked for Freight Australia and then with Rural and Baulk Pacific National, requirements for assisting you to obtain retirement pass are as follows:

You would need to apply for your service history from the department of transport if you have previously worked for the Public Transport Corporation (PTC).

Contact siva.sivanesan@transport.vic.gov.au and if you could provide your old departmental number and your start date it will make things easier to obtain your service history. Normally this would take around three weeks to receive correspondence back from the department of Transport. You can contact Siva on 96551709.

The second contact is:

sherinne.narain@pacificnational.com.au from Pacific National rural and baulk.—Don't forget underscore between Sherinne and Narain.

Once again you need to give Pacific National your start date and old departmental number from when you started with the PTC and email Sherinne. You can also contact Sherinne on 0298932584. This may take some time to receive your service history.

If you've worked for National Rail and Pacific National Intermodal, you would need to apply to Department of transport and give them your start date and original departmental number from when you worked with the PTC, and then email Pacific National with the same details to Denis Bingham denis.bingham@pacificnational.com.au.

Once again don't forget the underscore between Denis and Bingham. You can also contact Denis on 92487294. This may take some time to receive your service history. You would require both your service history's so that you can apply for your retirement pass prior to your retirement.

Bendigo O.H&S Report

By Larry Weston - Bendigo OH& S Rep

Two separate pin notices were put on by the conductors O.H&S rep that led onto risk management and safety meetings to try and resolve the issue of over length trains at short platforms. I argued that we needed two conductors on a six car train. I was told that by the time extra conductors were trained the platforms would be extended.

Management said we should isolate the rear doors of the train I said it was not safe to lock passengers inside a carriage of a packed train. Both pin notices were pushed out by Work Cover.

Train platforms were to be extended on the Bendigo track in two batches of four platforms. The first to be extended was Woodend. Work started but by the time the Woodend platform was almost finished, V/line pulled all the funding on the work. No further platforms would be extended; the money is to be put in to technology on the trains.

So a three car Vlocity was fitted with scanners on the side to detect if a platform was present so it only released the doors that were actually on the platform. This train run around as a trial for period of time they even purposely didn't clean the scanners for a number weeks. The trial was not successful. So V/line are looking at something else.

In the mean time, a procedure was put out by Donald Armstrong to isolate the rear three doors on each side of a six car train. The problem being that by isolating these doors you are disabling the circuit that prevents power to the controller if a door is still open. Not long after this procedure a report came in of a train travelling at 160kph full of passengers with one of the rear doors fully open. The driver travelled from Southern Cross to Macedon before he noticed in the mirror that a rear passenger door was open. Again by isolating doors you cut out the indication that a door is open and you get power to the controller.

All this is placed in V/lines 'to hard basket'. Every time I raise this issue at meetings it goes nowhere. To date we are running on good luck. We haven't lost a passenger yet. What does it take to resolve this? Many drivers are confused to isolating doors on long train no time is given to carry this procedure out or to cut the doors back in on arrival.

V/locity

Steps are still causing injury to drivers there is no easy fix to this one so a procedure was put out how to properly use these steps to try and reduce injury. Whenever we do our fuel point job, a driver would climb up and down about fifty to sixty times. The steps are not good for your ankles and knees but have you noticed some hand rails have now got anti slip on them for the full length. By the end of a shift this has acted like sandpaper and you have no skin left on your hands.

Sunbury

Electrification project is still ongoing. Crews reported many incidents of safety, so a meeting was called to explain to us how safe their operation of safety works. Well their system of safety is the most unsafe we have ever seen.

Their safety work site manager went into great lengths to deny that breaches were happening, it's a shame he didn't put as much energy into actually controlling his contractors and sub contractors because incidents kept happening. Can you believe these same people asked me if it would be okay to stand over head stanchions up while we ran trains at 160kph. I said no. That wasn't good enough so they invited all the O.H&S reps to a trial run to show us how safe this was.

But their safe working was again not up to scratch. All I asked for was full protection with flagmen and dets both line both directions. This was too much for them so they were told us it would be a lot safer for crews and passengers if you stood them up at night time when you could have as much time as you like with no trains running. This didn't go down to well, but safety does come first.

The whole project was steaming along well. The project would be completed by Xmas 2011. Now it's go slow time with little work taking place. Who knows when it will be finished. I must say there contractors using sub contractors to lay cabling that didn't work very well.

That's enough for one report. We are a happy, healthy, proud lot at Bendigo.

Keep smiling. It's all good.

STOP PRESS!!

Rod King, V/Line Train Crew Manager has put out a circular on 22/2/12 stating that no more isolating doors on velocity trains. Common sense prevailed



NELSON'S COLUMN.

This column contains poisonous libels and vitriolic slanders, colourful language, nudity, violence, and smut of a general nature and anything else that helps sell Magazines, if you don't like it hit the road or e-mail me at booze.up@myplace.come.ok or call toll free 1800 SOD ORF

My Warning at top of page.

Several members have felt the need to take me to task over my Consumer Warning at the top, well ladies I've modified it so you can unknot your frillies now, Learn to live with it, use this as therapy and get on with your lives.

The Carbon Tax.



Meanwhile at The Sparx.

Why is The Met so hell bent on driving a wedge between themselves and their workforce, especially Drivers? I mean WTF is going down there?

We now have a situation at The Met where Qualified Drivers are actively seeking work with other Operators, I am personally aware of approximately 100+ Drivers at Metro who have either applied for V/Line, the Iron Ore Trains, Freight Operators or have already moved on.

Not to mention the people who are just going to retire because they are sick to death of the management style at The Sparx.

100+ Drivers would be a massive exodus, nearly 12% of the work force wanting to move on because the people running Metro haven't tried to meet with the Union and try and sort through their differences and try and reach a common ground.

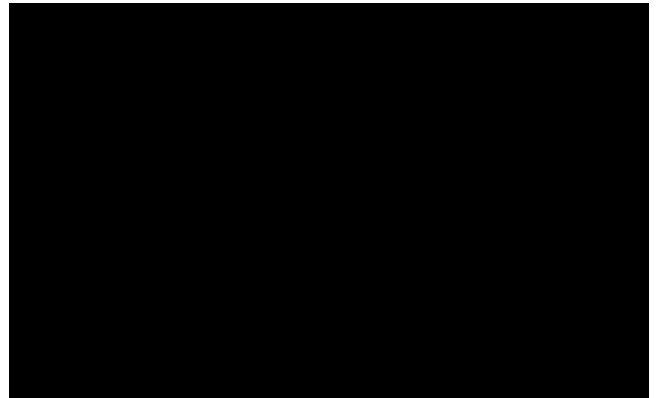
My personal point of this to members is if you are unhappy with your lot at any Operator then maybe it's time for a sea-change, who knows but you.

Rather than build bridges, What do they do? They seek to ban Magilla from the premises (and succeed albeit for three months) aiming to decapitate the Union based on the testimony of a couple of differently motivated persons, as Boris Badinoff, of Rocky & Bullwinkle fame, would say "First we get Moose then we kill Squirrel".

The Met wants to wake up and smell the coffee otherwise they will find a massive hole in their already sullen and resentful workforce.

The Sparx Management.

The recent attack on members' representation by legions of Security Guards, Locksmiths, Removalists plus missing valuables is a soiled dishonour in the history of our industry.



Content Deleted to prevent legal response from You Know Who!

This Company should hang its head in shame, at this point I have deleted what I really wanted to say, even though true, I have been made aware that Company Management are so thin skinned as soon as someone says nenena-narna to them they reach for their fiercest ambulance chasers and chant "sue him-sue him", Not bad are they.

Labor Caucus.



New start at V/Line.

Well after 19 years at the Sparks and 12 years of National Express/Connex and now a company owned from "China" upholding the tradition of making Rail Privatisation a cash cow for foreign entities in with the various state government of both sides of the political fence at the expense of the good people of Victoria, it's like a different world.

While I am not of the belief that V/Line are some sort of benevolent dictatorship whose HR Department aren't watching Metro with slaving interest, the obligation of the company to run a public utility using all revenue to improve the service for the people of Victoria is reasonable and it is 100% Australian Owned right here in Victoria, with all revenue going back into the State Utility.

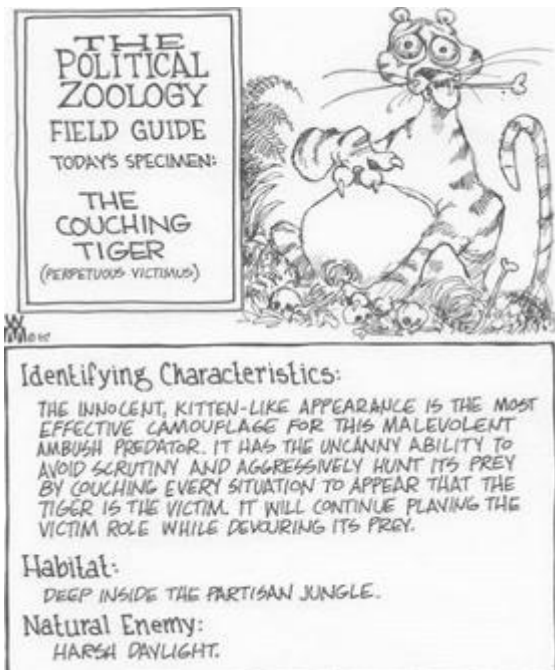
V/Line II.

There is a touch of Déjà vu here for me because after starting on the Job in Victoria at Caulfield in 1987 as a Station Assistant 3 I transferred to Westall Station as SA1 before moving to Spencer Street as a Conductor 2 in early 1989 and in late 1990 I transferred to South Dynon Loco as a Trainee Driver, after two years I was posted to ERD Jolimont to finish my Driver training and eventually ended up at Westall Depot in 1998 and in 2011 I applied for Southern Cross Drivers and one of my first jobs on being made a Second Creature was on South Dynon Fuel Point! If I end up back at Caulfield I'm screwed.

Down at the department of Transport.



Guess who?



Truth In Advertising.

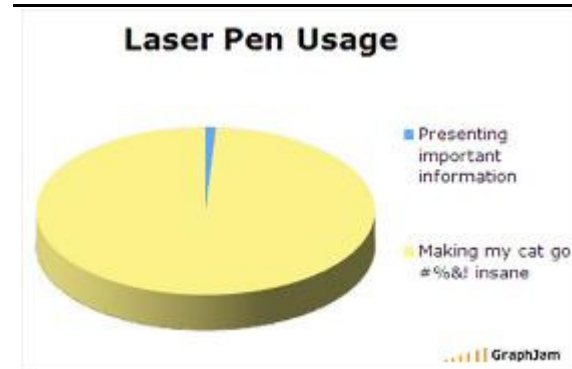


New Metropolitan Offices.

The Metropolitan Sub-Division has a new home at Level 6 No. 1 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne. That should future proof the local blokes from Metropolitan Operators and fellow travellers as they try to screw the members.

That it has come to this is a sad day in Industrial Relations and does not bode well for reaching agreements.

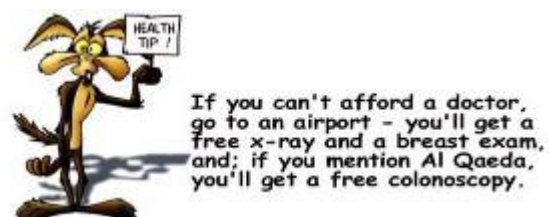
North Melbourne Many Years Ago.



Meanwhile in Carlton:



Free Medical Advice.



Write in! It's your Mago. See ya later Drive

Judge on its own merits



TUBE CHIEF COMPARES HIMSELF TO ENGINEERING PIONEER BRUNEL.



Left: Isambard Kingdom Brunel and right, Andrew Lezala.

The chief executive of controversial Tube renewal firm Metronet has compared himself and his company to Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the greatest engineer in British history.

Writing in the latest issue of Metronet's staff magazine, Andrew Lezala says that he and the company have suffered "flak because they are "innovators of world-scale projects who are "challenging the status quo".

He adds: "It reminds me of one of the greatest innovators of the 19th century. Isambard Kingdom Brunel left his mark imprinted on our lives in numerous ways... The Herculean task that we are undertaking at Metronet might even be comparable to some extent.

Metronet, which is charging the taxpayer about £20billion for its 30-year Tube refurbishment contract, has been attacked by Mayor of London Ken Livingstone as "the consortium of your nightmares after a series of major failures.

Its weekend engineering work has repeatedly overrun into the Monday rush hour, causing chaos for travellers. Its station refurbishment programme is badly behind schedule and this summer Tube passengers suffered 20mph speed restrictions after Metronet failed to prepare rails for the warmer temperatures.

Mr Lezala's remarks were greeted with incredulity by

transport experts last night. "The daring and achievement of Brunel does lie at the opposite end of the spectrum to Metronet" said Tony Travers, professor of government at the London School of Economics.

"Brunel knocked down hills to create a straight line from London to Bristol and built the SS Great Eastern, which people didn't think would even float. At my local station, Metronet have been struggling for the best part of a year to replace a few tiles." Mr Travers said the most worrying thing about Mr Lezala's comments was the "profound and revealing lack of self-awareness" they displayed about Metronet's inadequacies.

"Brunel did great projects, serious pieces of engineering he said. "Whether coating Roding Valley station with CCTV cameras and customer help points is quite in the same league, I rather doubt.

A Metronet spokesman said Mr Lezala had "certainly not intended to compare himself to Brunel, but was making a comparison with the scale of the task faced by the public-private partnership to maintain and improve the Tube over 30 years. "It is without doubt the biggest metro project in the world" he said. "Brunel used a lot of innovation in the way he tackled his projects. In a different way, we're using innovations that Brunel would not have even thought of.

In his 33-year engineering career, Brunel created dozens of pioneering and iconic structures, most of which remain in daily use today. He was recently voted the second greatest Briton of all time by a poll of BBC viewers, runner-up only to Sir Winston Churchill.

Brunel built the Great Western main line from Paddington station to Bristol, including what remains the widest brick arch bridge in the world at Maidenhead, the world's then longest railway tunnel at Box and the Grade 1 listed stations at Temple Meads and Paddington. The whole route has been proposed as a Unesco World Heritage site, but continues to serve travellers as efficiently as it did 150 years ago. Brunel also built the SS Great Britain, the first iron-hulled ship to cross the Atlantic.

Mr Lezala, a career railwayman, is a former president of the rail-wagon builder Bombardier. He was also president of Daimler Chrysler's metro division and a managing director of Daimler Chrysler rail operations in Australia and New Zealand.

This is an exact copy cut and pasted as is from The London Evening Standard Web Site included as is and unedited go to;
<http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/news/article-23365118-tube-chief-compares-himself-to-engineering-pioneer-brunel.do>

Two years in, Metro proves poor rail replacement



Reid Sexton

January 24, 2012



The revelation raises questions over the decision to dump former train operator Connex.

Photo: John Woudstra

WHEN train operator Connex was dumped in 2009, Melburnians breathed a sigh of relief.

Then premier John Brumby told long-suffering commuters that the network would improve as new operator Metro fixed the problems that had plagued the network for years.

But government data shows replacement operator Metro has run trains later in its first two years than Connex did in its last two. The revelation raises questions over the decision to dump Connex and has come despite Metro receiving hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars.

RMIT transport expert Paul Mees said it showed the system needed major investment from the Baillieu government rather than rebranding.

"The system is a complete failure but ... [Transport Minister] Terry Mulder when he was in opposition said he was going to fix this," Mr Mees said. "But he seems to be

content to preside over the system that he inherited from the previous government and run the same kind of spin about how we should be grateful because things weren't as bad as last year."

Departmental figures show that in its last two years of operating the network before it was replaced on November 30, 2009, Connex trains ran within four minutes and 59 seconds of their schedule 87.7 per cent of the time. In 2008, Connex's figure was 88.9 per cent, before it fell in 2009 as it faced industrial action and a crippling heatwave.

Metro marked its two-year anniversary at the end of November by posting a two-year punctuality figure of only 86.4 per cent.

If Metro's two-year figure matched Connex's, about 25 more trains would run on time every day.

While lateness figures for Connex allowed a margin of five minutes and 59 seconds compared to four minutes and 59 seconds for Metro, the department released to *The Age* the four minute and 59 second figures for Connex to make a direct comparison possible.

Both operators cancelled about 1.3 per cent of services over the respective two-year periods.

Analysis shows that in its last full year for which data is published, Connex got \$658.5 million in taxpayers' money for payments such as ticket sales, contractual obligations and incentives and penalties.

In contrast, Metro received about \$854.6 million in the most recent 12-month period, fuelled largely by extra payments for maintenance to improve the network worth more than \$10 million a month.

When Connex was scrapped before the state election, Mr Mulder said its performance problems were the fault of the Brumby government and not the operator. Yesterday he said that, despite initially facing "many challenges", in December Metro had met its performance targets seven months in a row and was improving rapidly despite running more than 100 extra services daily than Connex did. He said this was due partly to the government funding an extra \$25 million maintenance a year.

This is an exact copy cut and pasted as is from The Age Web Site included as is and unedited go to

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/two-years-in-metro-proves-poor-rail-replacement-20120123-lqe16.html#ixzz1kLHD58Ai>

Heritage Pool Crew Report

By Mick Welch
RTBU(LD) Heritage Crew Pool Coordinator

It has been a long time since an article has been published in the divisional news regarding heritage and from the feedback received you want to know what is happening.

R711

Oil fuel steam locomotive R711 has been in storage for a number of years since the closure of West Coast Railways. Following cab Inspections an agreement between Steamrail and the committee allowed test runs to be done on R711.

On the first test run to Bacchus Marsh it was noted as not performing at its best, and on its second to Seymour the truth came out on its return trip. When stopped at Newport an unusual hiss of steam was noticed, and after further investigation a number of super heater elements were changed over.

On its third test run to Seymour with a five car load, its performance improved considerably proving it able to easily maintain a schedule equivalent to an "N" class locomotive.

There is very little on oil burning locomotives in our courseware, and it is in the process of being drafted at this moment. How it is going to be delivered and training of steam crews is still to be decided.

Training

With the closure of ITTD, V/Line will be our RTO when they gain their accreditation.

At present we have permission to conduct training with our current courseware and complete anything started prior to the closure of ITTD.

It is anticipated the attrition rate of steam crew members due to retirement will be high and we need to enter into steam locomotive training in 2012 starting with driver training in March and an expression of interest for fireman training from current members.

If you do not mind a lot of work and have a gritty determination to learn, forward your interest in

fireman training to the division.

To new members who have signed up to the Heritage Crew Pool over the past couple of years, you are still urgently needed, and will require further training in rolling stock etcetera, before you crew a train. This can only be done when our training issues are resolved.

2011 saw the introduction of new heritage rolling stock the Diesel Electric Rail Motor. We have currently run a class of six members with the last two remaining to complete their training in 2012, and plan for another class of four.

Rosters

Dave and Darren put a lot of hard and time consuming work into crewing of trains. All that they require from you is a speedy accurate reply regarding your availability to work. So keep your diaries up to date and do not make yourself available to work when you are already working for your primary employer.

Steam Locomotive Competencies.

In brief a motion was passed by the heritage committee in 2010 for steam locomotive crews who have not crewed a steam hauled train in excess of two years for the crew member to have a check ride prior to crewing a train solo, and when not crewed a steam hauled train in excess of five years the competency is lost, requiring complete training.

Committee Members

Your committee members are: Mick Welch (Chair), Steve Cox (Proxy), Stewart Anderson, Phil Bertram, Andrew Johnson, Craig Haber, Ron Hall, Jeremy Lavery, Barry Lloyd, Trevor Penn, Dave Richards, and Darren Wood.

If you have any questions or want to join the Heritage Crew Pool, these are the people to chase up.

Farewells

We wish the best for the future and in health for long time serving fireman Barry Eadie, now retired, and committee member/steam driver Garry Young, who has gone west. Youngies assistance and enthusiasm will be missed.



HERITAGE
90% men 10% machine

Heritage Crew Steam Locomotive Fireman Positions

The RTBU(LD) Heritage Committee are seeking expressions of interest from Heritage Pool Crew members for anticipated requirements for Steam Locomotive Fireman positions.

Interested members please submit your application in writing to the State Heritage Coordinator c/o the Locomotive Divisional Office or via email to rtbu@iprimus.com.au
Please include any details of relevant qualifications and/or previous steam experience.

Applicants will be required to hold a Current Worksafe Boiler licence or be willing to obtain one.

Expressions of Interest must be received by close of business on the 27th of April 2012.

For any further enquiries please contact your heritage representative.

Mick Welch RTBU Heritage Coordinator 0429949835

Phil Bertram (PN Intermodal) 0401315009

Steve Cox (Metro) 0402477607

Trevor Penn (Vline) 0428306153

Jeremy Lavery (PN R&B) 0427288443

Cab Committee report Southern Cross:

By Karl Costanzo
Cab Committee Coordinator

Loco's

There seems to be a number of issues arising from the fitment of new seats to the standard gauge locos. While the ride qualities are good, (once the driver has adjusted the seat to suit), they are a larger seat and space becomes an issue. The position of the instructor's seat (second person's side back wall), is inconsistent and needs to be relocated to a standard position or a new type fitted or both. When these seats were initially fitted for trial, it was only on the driver's side and the few comments we received were of a positive nature, now that they are on both sides, we need to look at the new set of problems this presents. Eventually, these seats will find their way onto the entire fleet of 'N's both sides of the cab, so get your feedback in now.

Sprinter

CD player on dash, (in front of L/H corner windscreen pillar), will hopefully be fitted soon for trial.

Low fuel indicator light: Incorporates a float on the fuel tank behind existing sight glass that electronically transmits a signal (as a percentage of fuel left), via a unique frequency to both cabs of that particular Sprinter only. To be fitted for trial.

Vlocity

Headlight mod. There are a number of units still shining into the cab at night. Please book this as a fault and put on green form to identify the units for rectification.

No news on fuel light for these yet.

Bombardier are in the process of checking all sliding adjusters on Vlocity driver's seats. There are a few out there that are not sliding all the way back and it seems that these seats that have a different, non-standard set of tracks fitted. Some seats have the vertical height adjuster on the left, some on the right as well, so there is some work ahead to get this right.

This may or may not be contributing to the ergonomic factor, in which some drivers are experiencing shoulder / arm trouble whilst driving.

I have had questions from some drivers asking why the conductor's seat has a lumbar support control, whereas the driver doesn't. Apparently, the driver's seat has an inbuilt lumbar control that works by a spring system and automatically conforms to the driver's back as he/she leans into it.

The OH&S committee is working on the identification and documentation of loco's in the fleet that still contain asbestos. This mainly centers around older locos and is classed as being low risk. The areas being looked at are the component backing boards inside the electrical cabinets, and gasket material in the engines themselves. Most of these units were identified several years ago and have had the appropriate warning labels applied in the elect cabinets.

Here is a picture of a loco fitted with a new type of fridge.



It is a "Lemair", has a whopping one and a half star energy rating, is bolted to the floor and incorporates a four socket power board for your convenience. No need to worry about space, your bag will neatly fit on top, once you have climbed over it to reach your seat. Trials will start on 01/04/12.

Thanks, That's all, Karl and the Cab Committee Team.

Campbell's Comments

With David Campbell

Since my term as Signal Sighting Rep for the Metropolitan Division ended, I have been able to stand back and observe how "things" within the Network operate, and the experience has been most interesting. With the indulgence of our publisher, I will share some of these observations with you.

My duties for the Union meant that I had to spend many hours in meetings with managers of various levels, from different companies and with different agendas. Some of these guys and gals, even when we disagreed about things (not uncommon), still had at heart the best interests of the Victorian Railways. Others were simply interested in ripping money off the VR, exemplifying the worst excesses of the Privatisation Theory. Despite our professional differences, several of these managers quietly stay in touch, being clearly concerned about the direction that we are heading down within Victoria. These guys ring or e-mail me (on my private number; avoids the company traces) and ask advice about things, or just share complaints about the new world order. Naturally I am keen to protect these people, as their information is worth more to us than their demise (for that reason, anyway!)

Of course, the problem with the way that the Suburban Railways in particular were privatised is that in effect it shields a weak Government from scrutiny by deflecting all questions, concerns, complaints, etc about the railways to a privatised Operator, who has no requirement (or even interest) in dealing with them unless they can make more profits. The private operator then is free to charge outrageous sums to do relatively routine additional works, be they to run more trains, upgrade equipment, whatever. An example might be a minor, safety-based upgrade to a signal installation, where the privateer knows the Government is going to pay for it. The privateer can specify that they will do the work (not by public Tenders), and then charge more than double a reasonable rate for the work. Marvellous for the foreign shareholders, but a lousy deal for the people of Victoria, and the whole process does not have a vested interest in giving value or providing better services. One outcome in the tight budgetary world inhabited by State Treasury is that less actual works are being done for the Rail industry than might have been the case with a finite sum of money available.

I am not picking on the companies that run and have run the suburban network as such; they have requirements to provide maximum profits for their shareholders. The fundamental issue is that successive weak State Governments have found it more convenient to operate the rail industry in this way, and they should be held accountable. The privateers, as at Nuremberg, are just doing their job.

SPADS

Signals Passed At Danger are a worrying thing for everybody. Drivers feel the impact in so many ways, and management share the distress, although often for different reasons to us. SPAD statistics are used by management world-wide as a way to identify the effectiveness of their safety systems. Comparisons are made between Operators based on kilometres travelled between SPADs, and the good (and the poorly) performing Companies and their managers become soon apparent.

Under successive Operators, both the state government then private operators, the SPAD rate had declined for years past. The performance under Connex (remember them?) was particularly noteworthy, as the average distance between SPADs increased while the likelihood of drivers encountering a signal at stop increased (extra traffic), and new equipment that included SPAD alarms was introduced. The likelihood of having a SPAD thus rapidly increased, while it became more likely that the incident would be reported, thus having a reduction in that time was some achievement (hats off to ourselves!) Of course, for much of this time, the driving grade was a respected and valued part of the organisation; sadly this perception started changing when Connex imported some Boat People from the UK to take charge.....followed soon after by their loss of franchise. Of course the two were not related....

Then the Brave New World of Metro Trains Melbourne arrived. An unholy alliance between an Asian company and.....more Boat People from the UK! Sadly, unlike parts of Asia where the driving grade is respected (in Japan the station staff salute drivers of trains entering their stations), we seem to have gotten the rejects. The Metro management technique has seen drivers hounded for all sorts of trifling matters. Examples of drivers, both as a grade and as individuals, being persecuted abound (some below), however the effect on drivers has to be considered. And here is where the SPAD rate comes in.

For the first time in years the SPAD rate is trending up; more SPADs are occurring. It is easy to blame newer drivers, but that has always been a high-risk group; any notable increase in less-experienced driver SPAD rate reflects on how the newer drivers are trained and nurtured. The training hasn't changed all that much over the years, and many elements of the training have improved, therefore I don't believe the training has deteriorated in a way that has led to the increase in SPADs.

CHRISTMAS LEAVE

Over many years past, our masters have made a couple of dozen extra leave spots available over the Christmas/ New Year period. The chance for drivers to enjoy a week or two with their families at a holiday time has been precious, and many drivers over the years have been able to use this opportunity to get some quality family time, a rare treat in our industry.

At the end of 2011, Metro Trains Melbourne (supporter of boat people from the Mother Country) simply did not run a "Christmas Ballot". No extra drivers were able to get time

off. Now, I know that giving a handful of us some holidays costs money, and that it needs some effort from our Masters. but the point is that it represents another example of MTM "thumbing their nose" at drivers, and thus lowering morale and increasing resentment within the driving grade. See notes above about SPADs.

LOCKERS

One of the Boat People sent me a nasty memo recently about my locker at Flinders Street. As with many outstation drivers, the chance to store items somewhere relatively securely is at times important to me, whether for Christmas presents, change into dry clothing after I get drenched coming back from a North Melbourne shunt, leave my work bag for an hour while I do a quick (!) shunt to Burnley, spare umbrella for that unexpected rain, short-term storage of personal goods, the list goes on. My locker was issued decades ago, and the convenience to me was important.

Now, this Boat People manager wrote to me demanding that my locker be cleaned out within 2 weeks, after which they would do the job for me. The scrawl he used reflects the poor standard that Metro applies to their work, and some examples were:- Flinders street (note lower case for Street). "cooperation" (yes, that's right, no hyphen).

It seems that he wanted my locker for other drivers because he was running out of space. I am still at a loss why HIS problem needs ME to sacrifice; silly me I thought that he was the manager (yes, the capital letter was deliberately omitted!)

DEPOT MANAGERS

These people seem to fall within one of two categories. There are the chaps from Australia (whether from Victorian driving grade or not), and then there are the Boat People. Now, these Australian Managers seem to believe that the Boat People have special privileges that are not shared with the Australians. Claims of \$15 000 extra payments for rent assistance; grocery bills paid, there are other claims. Now, I am hardly in any position to confirm or deny these payments, but when two Managers make the claims in the presence of other drivers, that suggests both grave disquiet, even rebellion, among the Managers, as well as me having witnesses. Seems that some of these chaps are starting to regret their short-sighted decision to sup with the devil!

PUNCHING BAGS

Members are aware that Metro pursued our Divisional Secretary through Fair Work Australia. One outcome was that our Divisional Secretary was banned from Metro premises for three months.

Now, to declare my personal interest and bias. I did not stand as part of Marc Marotta's team at the last Union elections, and having failed to gain sufficient votes, my term ended. Marc and I have exchanged words, but at no time did I ever feel threatened, nor were any of Marc's comments unreasonable. We had disagreements, more about detail than substance; at no time did Marc treat me improperly. The membership voted resoundingly to support the team that were elected, under the leadership of Marc, and I believe that

the team elected to serve we the members has earned the right to be unambiguously supported. Beyond that, they are actually rather good at their jobs!

Reading the judgment of Fair Work Australia was strange. The case was portrayed widely through the media (particularly Metro's rag, the Feral Moon or some such) as being about an allegation of an assault. Even after the case was finalised, the media portrayal was all about the alleged assault.

Now, I am trying to be objective here. The case which allegedly involved possible criminal charges (and therefore might normally have proceeded through the criminal court system) was dealt with through a system completely separate from the criminal court system. As a result the usual legal concepts of the Prosecution having to prove their case, rather than a defendant proving their innocence, did not apply.

The judgement found that he did not accept the account of the incident from (the person who brought the claims of assault) was "an accurate account of the incident" (para 46).

In Para 48 of the judgement:-

[48] That (Marc Marotta) launched an attack of the ferocity claimed by (the person making the allegation), completely unprovoked and on a man about whom he may have harboured particular views but with whom he had had only limited personal dealings, stretches credulity.

Later in Para 67 of the judgement, FWA found that:-

[67] Taking into account all of the relevant material before me, I find it more likely than not that (the person making the allegation) did approach (Marc Marotta) on 6 June 2011 and take hold of his arm in the manner (Marc Marotta) contends.

Note that the person making the allegation is not named here, and specific words changed by me are in brackets. To be completely impartial, FWA also found that Marc Marotta was at fault...well, sort of.

In the conclusion, FWA states:-

[88] I have not been able to make findings to the requisite level of satisfaction on the precise degree of physical violence involved in what I have termed the 'scuffle' between the (Marc Marotta) and (the person making the allegation). Nor am I able to be sufficiently satisfied, beyond the findings I have made, of the extent to which (the person making the allegation) may have contributed to such violence as did occur.

The effect of this is to attack the union leadership on two fronts at a time when their workloads has risen phenomenally. Our Divisional Secretary cannot now enter Metro premises, making it almost impossible for him to properly defend us (and how he does what he still manages to do is just amazing!) We have a mean-spirited management, using Boat People to do their dirty work. Our conditions are under dire threat, and an attack on our wages seems inevitable. Metro has consistently shown their attitude towards us, in that drivers who make predictable human

errors will be forced to resign or be sacked. The FWA judgement and its consequences simply add to the difficulty that our leadership has to contend with. At this time, I know that members will be tolerant when sometimes our messages are not immediately acted on. Irrespective of our politics, we must work together to support our Union, despite the attacks on us by Metro.

Now, because FWA was "not satisfied" with Metro's case, they only imposed a half penalty against our Divisional Secretary (3 months suspension of his "right of entry permit", instead of 6 months). Sounds a bit like an electric chair running at half voltage, or a guillotine that only severs half the head, just in case the judge got it wrong.

MONUMENTS

What is it about stations these days? I always thought that generally people went to a station to catch a train; exceptions being the railfans, graffiti gangs, and drug dealers. Two of these groups have little interest in the station architecture, and the interest of the third group ("fresh canvas") does not reflect what others feel represents a nice station.

It seems these days that we cannot have just a verandah to keep the rain out, a couple of seats and perhaps a Myki machine. No, the new station must be a monument. And if it doesn't achieve what some of us consider basic needs of shelter (try to find a dry spot at North Melbourne on a windy rainy day) and function (try transferring from the suburban platforms to the regional at Southern Cross, never mind trying to find a toilet), it seems the architects simply get more awards.

Of course, I am just old-fashioned. I think the passengers simply want to get on a train and leave the place, or get off a train and go somewhere else. I even assume that passengers.....sorry, "customers" in the new world speak) would rather more trains than more glass and steel public art. I cannot help but wonder how they do it.

ROCK AND ROLL

X'trapolis trains have always been notorious for rough riding, but the wretched things are now being made to look worse by the poor condition of the track. And this is not just on the old Hillside network, sadly the track is deteriorating everywhere. Metro's version of "maintenance" seems confined to doing a half-hearted job of a major upgrade (wonder if they still charge full costs to the Government?), then ignoring all the complaints that follow. The railway line to Hurstbridge is a case in point. Practically all sleepers were replaced with concrete, however the drains remain blocked, the ballast was graded back into place without fresh ballast laid, crippled rails abound. The only thing Metro achieved was to lower the risk of "track spread" derailments.

The woeful state of the network is manifest elsewhere. The overhead wiring now seems to be failing as frequently as the bad old days around 1980. Trees falling onto the wires are a big factor, reflecting the lack of preventative maintenance, which of course Metro's spin doctors claim to be the result of extreme weather conditions. They claim that their

trackwork has eliminated track buckles, when we haven't had a really hot summer. Poor Connex might still be around if the 2008/09 summer had been as mild as the 2011/12 season!!

CONSTANT COMPLAINTS

How many other drivers are getting sick and tired of reporting the same infrastructure faults to Metrol, without any action following? Station lights out, rough track, SPOT equipment faults, trees blocking signals, the list goes on. Probably the most frustrating thing is the knowledge that Metrol may not even report the problem to the responsible area for fixing; I know on occasions the maintainers have expressed frustration about this same issue, especially when the fault becomes a serious issue.

So, through the pages of this journal, I would suggest that the driver making a report of infrastructure problems, be given an identifying number by Metrol. This number could then be used to follow-up a fault, and if dis-satisfied take it to the Union. This sort of system will overcome allegations that Metrol doesn't do anything, and is similar to the system that ARTC uses, where the Train Controller provides a TCR number. One chap even suggested using the Fault Management System (as for train faults) to provide the unique number; this may be a useful way to add on to an existing system relatively quickly.

REVOLVING DOORS

No, they aren't fitted to the trains. Why are so many drivers suddenly leaving Metro to work for other Operators, both in Victoria and elsewhere?

I have never seen morale at the sparks so low, and Metro seems determined to hasten the exodus. The vicious attitude of management to us (and loyal railway staff in other grades) seems bizarre. If they were intending to close the place down, I could understand it, however the pressure seems to be mainly around running more trains, not less. Passenger numbers are swelling to record levels, and will have to continue to climb if Melbourne is to continue to function at all.

I just cannot fathom Metro's attitude. Can any reader enlighten me?

PN Bulk Rail recruitment

Mark Findlay
Driver Trainer – Assessor

During the "drought years" many Drivers working in Maryborough sought other options and numbers fell significantly. Rail freight traffic through Maryborough, grain and produce on the Mildura Fruity, is directly linked with rainfall.

Since the rains have returned we have seen an upswing in recruitment across depots at PN Bulk Rail. Maryborough

received 6 Trainees in 2008 (all are now Drivers), 7 in 2010, 6 in 2011 and 3 returned Drivers.

New Trainee's receive both Off and On Job Training in all aspects of Locomotive/Train operation. Together with route knowledge this process usually takes between 24 – 36 months before becoming a Driver. Proposals and ideas have been circulated by PN on shortening this timeframe. Maryborough has a dedicated training team, with a mix of experience, who work well with Trainee's assigned to them. Trainer's such as Junior Thomas, Jim Brayshaw, Alan Newton and Robert Clugston have many years of experience to pass on. We have been able to maintain the high quality of Driver operating on the Network.

Shunting operations carried out by train crew is a large proportion of work as wagons need to be placed, loaded and picked up, as well as marshalled for train running requirements. Crews must plan and execute these shunts, which can be challenging, especially for Trainee's with little rail experience. Training for these requirements with an emphasis on safety is paramount as most of this work is carried out in remote locations.

Classifications in the new EA regarding training have altered

and a meeting with Management is to be arranged on how it will be delivered to suit our training needs.

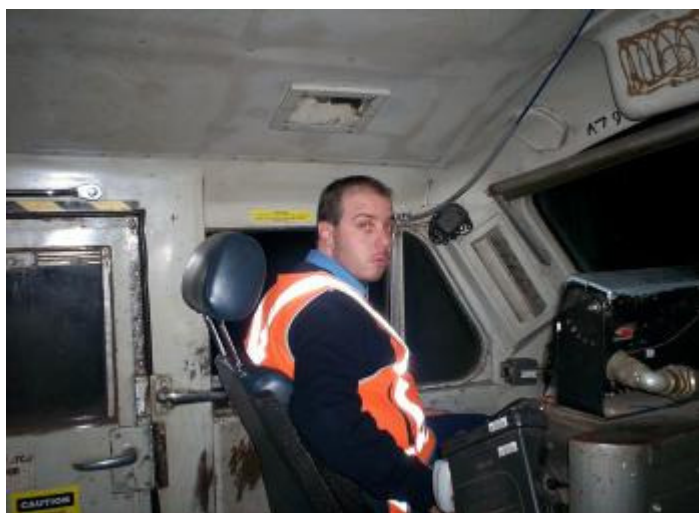
SCID's to Driver Trainer – Assessor OJT's to Advanced Locomotive Driver. OJT's in the past had to attain a qualification to carry out their role to impart knowledge and to sign off On Job Workbooks. The criteria for the new classification is the "Driver be qualified on All Principal Roads that apply to Depot Rosters." And "Employee may be required to instruct in the normal duties of train operation to other Employee's". No formal training qualification is necessary. Some Drivers were approached regarding being promoted to this level. An Expressions Of Interest memo to ALL Drivers has now been circulated.

Recruitment has continued over recent weeks to cater for extra work. I am suspecting that the successful applicants will have varied range of experience from new starts, to Drivers renewing their diesel qualifications, and Drivers not long departed returning to their old depot's.

With long range rain forecasts remaining positive, training for Locomotive Drivers in Maryborough and other grain depots looks set to continue. A huge turn around from 5 years ago.



Class Photo of the 2011 Class L to R
Mark Findlay, Josh Murphy,
Kate Hardingham, Matt O'Connor (Ouyen),
Sean Flannery, Brad Cosway,
Tim Gosman (Ouyen), Jamie Robins,
Darren Brown, Scott Pitcher (Geelong)



Photos of new Drivers from the 2008 intake at Maryborough Clint Hickson (left) and Tom Shaw (right).

Signal Sighting Report

By Colin Holly

By now most drivers would have seen how unsuccessful breaking up our rail industry has been, whilst signaling is just one component, it's an important interface that we deal with every day. As drivers we are not really interested in who owns the lease on the network, only that we come to work and the signaling looks much the same. If you pull up at Benalla, Bendigo or Belgrave, you're not scratching your head to work out what's going on. The signal sighting reps from each area work together ensuring operators provide contestant outcomes i.e. similar heights, light intensity and position of signals.

Leading up to privatisation we were told outside money would come to the industry taking us forward to a new modern railway. Unfortunately it's not been the success promised, in particular, signals on the Metro network. It doesn't take much to see how tired much of the signaling is. The painting of signal targets, hoods, masts and structures has been neglected. It would be simple to work out that it's just a maintenance task, like it would be with your house. Unfortunately Metro doesn't see it the same way, claiming it's not maintenance and they don't have to touch it. They might paint a target or two if push comes to shove, but they have no maintenance program to paint any of it.

The signal maintenance staff have issues with older type ladder and landings, they're rusted, the cages are too small and the ladders are too narrow posing an unsafe work environment. Metro know they have hundreds of the "do not climb" structures on the network, they require an occupation, overhead power off and a cherry picker to access. Their scheduled 6 month maintenance for these signals consists of standing on the ground and looking for a light. Even on the signal masts that they can still access, you can't lean around to clean the lens. A light was out at South Kensington recently, it took 2 ½ days to change the globe. With no planned or preventive maintenance program, the older signals are just worn-out.

The signals on the St Albans –Albion section are older style signals falling into this category. Whilst you might make out a light at night or maybe cloudy weather,

there's no hope when it's bright sunlight. The engineers who design the signals have to ensure they have a certain brightness, fall within a colour spectrum range and have them focused for an approach train. With masts leaning over, dull and dirty lamps, the signals are not fit for their designed purpose. We managed to have five of them replaced; the rest will be done before the end of the year as part of Regional Rail works at Albion.

TPWS Metro Area

The rail regulator is concerned that regional rolling stock is not fitted with stop enforcement within the Metro area. Some funding has been provided to fit 8 signals a year with TPWS. Considering how many signals there are on the network it's a small drop in the ocean. We are told the TPWS trial location at Dandenong is a success, that is the interlocking will support the application of the infield hardware.

Fortunately no SPADs have occurred at any of the trial signals, so it ends up on what you definition of success is. The installation of TPWS is seen as mitigation applied after a SPAD event, the aim must be to reduce the likelihood of it occurring by providing signals that are bright and viewable. South Newport is the first location to be rolled out, with the new connection from the stabling sidings changing the risk profile, we identified that it must be part of the project to have the junction fitted. The installations will be one-offs over many years, as each signal is fitted it will have a "TPWS" board attached to the mast.

Benalla.

Nunn street Benalla level crossing has been operating continually when trains cross. The signalers at Juneee have no control over its operation and are unable to lift the crossing even though a signal protects it. Recently a crew waited ½ an hour as traffic banked up, fortunately the motorist were smart enough not to drive around the booms.

Another time we had the XPT terminate at Benalla, the crossing continually rang, ARTC fixed it by moving the train on.

We know it's happening and so does the regulator, so the more information we can get the more chance there is of fixing it.

Talkback from Hinch

with Michael A. Hinch
Passenger Sub-division, Southern Cross

Off the Rails...
But definitely on track.

A project proudly managed by Drivers – for Drivers

On Saturday 11th of February, I had the very great pleasure of attending my first Off The Rails (OTR) motorcycle run and after party. So my baby and I (the Harley) went on along. This was the 6th annual run which is open to all eager participants, whether they are on our job or not. But just exactly what is OTR? Well it has three components. Firstly a bloody good ride through some excellent windy country roads (heaven to a biker), then it involves a damn fine after party but most importantly it raises money for noble causes. But no one has to go on the ride to participate. You can simply go to the aforementioned damn fine party or buy a raffle ticket. It all goes to assist the cause.

You have probably seen the posters around every year advertising the event and like me you may have given it a cursory glance and thought little more of it. MISTAKE! ! This small but robust band of Loco Drivers and their partners engage in some outstanding pursuits which are aimed at assisting other Drivers and their families. In the past it has simply raised money for sundry good causes but now is focused solely on assisting Drivers and their families, should they find themselves in difficulty during such trying times as illness or bereavement so to explain the whole thing in greater perspective, let me take you back to its genesis.

In pursuit of these charitable quests, Geoffrey Depomeroy has proven himself every part the visionary of his legendary father the late great Norman W. Depomeroy. Whilst Norman contributed to our rail culture via the agency of historian and teacher, Geoff has taken a different direction and applied the same dedication his father showed by taking on the assistance of the venerable good cause.

In 2006, Geoff and his lovely wife Bronnie struck upon an idea of organizing an event to raise money with a view to helping his workmates. Why not combine a love for motorcycles with the rail culture, open it up to the rest of the world and make a difference? They invested \$1800 of their own money in the first event and it was a qualified success because they lost \$200. But they could see the possibilities and were committed

to press on. They did their share of soul searching and, buoyed by the support of fellow organizers went on to run the event, pretty much against the odds.

In 2008, they secured their first sponsor and finally got a positive return. Once the first sponsor gave the event some prominence, other sponsors recognized the benefit of participation and signed up their support. OTR now boasts a voluntary committee of twelve people who meet annually to organize a great event and a significant number of prominent sponsors.

They have supported the Royal Children's Hospital over the span of their existence and just recently donated an amazing amount of cash (it would not be fair to nominate the amount) so that one of our Drivers could travel to Germany to receive stem cell treatment for an injury. Over all, this band of brothers has been able to donate over \$18000 to various charities and assisted fellow Drivers. Doesn't that make your frinking jaw drop?!!

In a reality check, this group has a \$5000 overhead obligation before it can turn a single cent toward the cause, so support is what they truly need. So I urge you, next time you see a poster for one of their special efforts and indeed the annual party, buy a ticket. Come to the night out and have a great time and support some people such as Damien "*shakey*" O'malley who help organize something which is really worthwhile. And if you have a bike....then throw ya' bloody leg over it son and turn the twist grip !!! And if you're on a Harley, make sure you power at the apex of the curve else the bloody thing won't lean.

White Cain please..

Whilst it is true that we have an ageing demographic at V/Line, there is one item of door furnishing in our new depot (The borg cube, the star chamber, the thing that ate the rail motor depot... you know the one) which gives me cause for at least some curiosity if not concern... the words Male Toilet are written on the door of the dunny....in Brail... I don't know about you blokes but that makes me nervous.

Yet more wrongs to right.

In previous editions of *Loco Lines* I have advocated the return of services to some of those places where acts of historical stupidity saw the tracks torn up and replaced by rubber wheels. I have a nomination for another. The state of Victoria is spreading out and people have discovered that it is easy to live in a rural setting and still commute to work in the city by way of regional fast rail. You can live in a regional city and be at work in

the Melbourne in the time it takes to read the paper and do the cross word.

There is one such regional centre which has seen a growth boom in recent years and is screaming out for the return of a regional rail service. It is a place where women wear comfy shoes and the massage and spa pampering are luxurious treats. Local produce and boutique industry is thriving, but it is only accessible by road. Daylesford, Hepburn and Trentham.

Some of the infrastructure still exists in the tourist rail guise but it truly screams out for the return of a heavy rail link from Carlsruhe. Why don't successive state governments have the courage to be visionary, when indeed they have the benefit of hindsight? Yes we can applaud the few works going on around the place such as the Tarneit link etc whether they be logical or misguided but the restoration of services to those places where the service should never have been disestablished should be at the forefront of infrastructure planning. Yes we need freeways and that goes without saying but each of these road corridors should be complimented with a rail link that gives both commuter and tourist alike an option and each regional centre the support that only rail can provide.

Whilst penning this article, I had to seek the guidance of our present day historian in residence the august Trevor Penn, to seek out the correct spelling of the name Carlsruhe and he pointed out the bleeding obvious to me that there are other such growth areas (indeed be they sea change by nature) that would benefit from the re establishment of rail services. They are the Queenscliffe, which incorporates the boom area of Drysdale and the Romsey Landsfield track. Young Trevor gives lament the view (when you come around the curve) of a dead end siding at South Geelong as the door to an opportunity. And at Clarkefield, a hard right hand turn has the potential to the reopen the Victorian midlands as both a regional commute and a tourism destination. "I doffs' me hat to ya' Trev.."

Slogans, valid then and valid now.

I have harped on this one before but it is still pertinent. Back in the day, our time sheets had a special heading at the top of the page, it read "The best safety device ever invented is a careful person." Come on comrades let's put it back!

Michael Hinch

Off The Rails

Provided by Damian O'Malley and

Geoff De Pomeroy

A group of Drivers fundraising for the purpose of helping Drivers in an unfortunate position, i.e. long-term sickness, death or injury.

In the last 2 years, the families of Peter Clarke, Zsolt Ugari, Paul Hansen, Steve Anterton and Rick Kaleta have all received some comfort from not only the small financial assistance raised by the O.T.R. but also the feeling they are not alone at this stressful time in their lives.

Thursday, April 28, 2011

Dear Geoff and ALL members/supporters of "OFF THE RAILS"

I would just like to say a HUGE thank you for your fabulous gesture of assistance with the passing of Paul (Crome)..

As you know Paul was a lifetime motorcyclist and would be proud of the continued support that the train and motorcycling brotherhood have shown me, during this difficult time..

I wish you well with future fundraising and hope that your member's receive well deserved recognition for the important work that they do..

Again thanks and "stay upright"..

Cheers

Lesley Hansen..



To
Everyone Associated
With
"Off The Rails"
I would like to thank
you all
Very Much
for your presentation
recently given
to me,
OF GIFT VOUCHERS
Your Kindness is most
appreciated
THANKYOU!
Most Sincerely
JANE ANDERTON X



Above: photo is with Ray Sumner suburban train driver who has recently been sacked by Metro

Bike run and Raffles:

The bike run is always the 2nd weekend in Feb and there is a major raffle toward the end of each year .

For any further information or donations please contact Damian O'Malley

01/04/11
Lesley Kaleta

Dear Geoff,

I would like to say thank you so much for the gift vouchers. It is very much appreciated and your thoughts during this most difficult time means the world to me and my family.

I presume you are Norms son. I met him when he visited our home once and Rick thought the world of him.

Rick loved being a Train Driver. He loved the job, but even more, he loved being part of that big, caring family that railway employees become. He made some very special friends over the years.

Anyway, thank you again to you Geoff and your organization.

Yours Sincerely
Lesley Kaleta



Above: David Kaleta and Damian O'Malley. David's father was Rick Kaleta, a driver who passed away from cancer in 2010



Above: A photo of Damian O'Malley with Karl Bock who is going through treatment for cancer

Holiday Leave

By David Mortimer

One of the first issues to be resolved after completion of training is to be allocated a leave rotation.

This is done by the senior roster clerk and displayed on the leave roster in the sign on area. If not allocated within a week of starting as a driver, contact the union.

Leave entitlement is for four weeks every nine months on a time frame of five years which will equate to 5 weeks leave per year for a rotating shift worker. In a worst case scenario Metro may endeavour to allocate leave up to eighteen months after qualifying as a driver, to ensure you have sufficient leave in the bank to start the rotation, this being in Metro favour.

This is not acceptable given the pressure that the training system places upon you, fatigue factors of balancing life-style and shift work do not ensure you stay fresh and alert in a critical of transportation.

You're more likely that not to have a SPAD in first 18 months after qualifying. A calming break will help reduce this statistic. Just ensure that leave is rostered approximately 9 months after qualifying or a date that suits. Some latitude can be achieved, with leave being arranged to be taken earlier to this date. Contact the union if you need assistance in this matter.

Trainees upon completion of the course should have around 2 weeks leave available to them.

This rotation number will remain unchanged if you stay in the depot. However a move to an outstation will result in new holiday leave rotation.

This issue becomes complex when a new driver takes an out station job and keeps the old depot cycle number for their next annual leave (as is their right under our current agreement). A driver maintaining the old cycle, in this case will be required to come into the depot when the new outstation cycle falls due.

After knowing when annual leave is going to occur, let's outline the different types of leave covered by the UCA

Types of Leave

Annual leave 11.1.3. Employees are entitled to 192 hour leave after each 52 weeks. This gives you 4 weeks leave every nine months. Leave is accrued pro rata and cred-

ited on your anniversary date with the company.

If you become sick on annual leave you may apply to substitute sick leave. This is only for illness that would incapacitate you for more than one week.

Long Service Leave 11.1.4 A full time employee is entitled to 13 weeks leave with pay after 10 years continuous service for recreational purposes. Additional leave is accrued at 6.5 weeks for every additional 5 years service completed.

Pro rata long service is available after 4 year's service calculated at 1.3 weeks leave per year of service.

Parental leave 11.1.5, Maternity 11.1.6, Paternity 11.1.7, Adoption 11.1.8. This group of leaves are related to employees in connection with the birth or adoption of a child. For the purpose of this type of leave a child means the child of an employee less than 1 year old except for adoption where child means a person under 5 years of age.

It is best to consult the UCA for lengths of leave, entitlements and variations.

Maternity – Training and Accreditation Continuity Incentive 11.3.19 Parental leave can be broken for the purpose of maintaining training and accreditation as a driver. This is designed for those who will be continuously absent for at least 6 months.

To maintain accreditation a driver must complete a minimum of 2 shifts, one which must contain a Hurstbridge run, 1 shift continuation training and undergo any new operational requirements.

After returning to full time work for 3 months, a driver will be credited with an additional 5 days pay at ordinary time.

Sick 11.1.10 A full time employee accrues sick leave as follows: 21 days upon completion of the first year and then 15 days upon completion of the second and subsequent years.

Applications for sick leave are to be supported by a medical certificate or statutory declaration. Up to a maximum of 5 days can be taken without any supporting medical certificate in any sick leave year.

Unused sick leave credits accumulate from year to year without limitation.

Carers 11.1.11 An employee may use up to 10 days sick leave credits to care for immediate relatives or members of the household. In the event of no sick leave being

available to application can be made to use annual leave, unpaid leave or time off in lieu.

Bereavement 11.1.12 Up to 3 days at full pay may be approved in relation to the death of an immediate family member. Documented evidence is required to apply for this leave.

Compassionate 11.1.13 An employee may use up to 2 days of sick leave credits to spend time with an immediate family member on each occasion that they have a personal illness or injury that pose a serious threat.

Trauma 11.3.15 When a driver is involved in a serious incident with their train they are entitled to 5 days paid leave as per roster, provided post-traumatic stress counselling is undertaken.

Additional time off injured is provided under a Work-cover claim can be used if you feel you are not yet capable of returning to work.

Stopped at this point to A. Check details and B extend article

Jury Service Leave (Connex Policy cml-8.11-po-010) Not provided for in the UCA, a policy document exists for jury duty. Connex will make up the difference between payment from the state for jury service and ordinary time wages.

Firefighting or other Emergency Activity (Connex Policy cml-8.11-po-002 & cml-8.11-pr-007) Not in the UCA.

Employees who are registered members of a volunteer organisation or those who respond to a public appeal for volunteers may apply to be paid at normal rates for the period of absence.

Leave – Reserve Forces (Connex Policy cml-8.11-po-016) Not in the UCA. Connex will make available to any reservist to a maximum of 10 days leave per year to attend any armed forces requirement placed on them as a reservist. This leave is not cumulative. Any additional time required above the 10 days may be taken as leave without pay, annual, long service or any other entitlement to cover this period.

Leave Without Pay (Connex Policy cml-8.11-pr-009) Not in the UCA. There are times when staff members wish to take periods without pay. Note that there are conditions and this type of leave does not count as service in calculating long service, sick and annual leave.

Letters

Don't be intimidated! - A guide to your rights.

As members would be aware, Metro trains recently dismissed a Trainee Driver after conducting an interview at which the Trainee had no representation. While it's true that the individual concerned ignored good advice from the Union not to attend any interview unrepresented, the circumstances are a little more complicated than they first appear. It seems that the Trainee was coerced by a Manager into this interview with the threat of instant dismissal if he didn't attend. Perhaps the intention of the Manager was to prevent the Trainee from being represented.

It is easy for a qualified Driver to say that since it had been made clear to the Trainee that dismissal was likely he had nothing to lose by refusing to attend. However it's crucial to remember that trainees are in a very tenuous position. They are under considerable pressure, often unaware of their rights and easily intimidated. The case of the Driver who was sacked after a "chat" retrospectively became a formal, unrepresented interview also comes to mind.

It's now clear that certain Metro Managers will attempt to vary the process and conduct an interview without representation in order to get an *"easy kill"*. To achieve their goal these Managers will use language such as:

"I'm giving you a lawful instruction to attend this interview immediately".

These and similar statements are a selective quotation of the *Fair Work Act*, 2009 Section 19;

Meaning of *Industrial action*, (1) (c): *"a failure or refusal by employees to attend for work or a failure or refusal to perform any work at all by employees who attend for work"*.

Also used for selective quotation is of the Act is Section 19 (2); *Industrial action* does not include the following: (c) (ii) *"the employee did not unreasonably fail to comply with a direction of his or her employer to perform other available work, whether at the same or another workplace, that was safe and appropriate for that employee to perform."*

It appears that Human Resources and Metro Management have been schooled by Freehills, Metro's Lawyers of choice and the authors of John Howard's despised *Work-choices* Legislation. Metro Managers have clearly had advice on how to twist Section 19 to achieve their goal of conducting an interview without the employee representative being present. They *believe* that by refusing to attend an interview immediately an employee *is* refusing to perform work and *is* unreasonably failing to comply with a direction from his/her employer.

The **ONLY** scenario in which this could be valid would be where there is an urgent risk to the safety of a person/s and the employer gave direction to cease the unsafe activity.

The right to representation is also covered by clause 8.2 of the *Dispute Settling Procedure* of the Connex Melbourne Union Collective Agreement 2009 - 2012. There is also section 387 of the *Fair Work Act*; Criteria for considering harshness etc. ***"In considering whether it is satisfied that a dismissal was harsh, unjust or unreasonable, FWA must take into account:***

(d) any unreasonable refusal by the employer to allow the person to have a support person present to assist at any discussions relating to the dismissal."

This behaviour also contradicts Metro's own document on interview procedure which is reproduced here.

Marc Marotta
Branch Divisional Secretary
Locomotive Division, Victoria
Australian Rail, Tram and Bus Industry
Level 14, 222 Kings Way
SOUTH MELBOURNE VIC 3205

8 August 2011

Dear Marc

Employee support/representation at Interviews and Disciplinary Meetings

Further to our conversation today, I am writing to advise that:

1. Metro accepts that employees have the right to have a support person present when they are to be interviewed as part of any company investigation.
2. Metro accepts that employees have the right to have a support person or representative with them during meetings which may involve them being counselled or disciplined.
3. Metro accepts that the employee has a right to nominate their support person or representative for meetings outlined in 1 and 2 above.
4. Metro needs to make it clear that it is the responsibility of the employee to arrange and ensure that their support person or representative is available to attend any scheduled meeting.
5. Metro does not accept that where an employee has been given reasonable notice (i.e.: 3-5 business days) that they are to attend an investigation interview or disciplinary meeting and that their support person or representative is unable to attend this scheduled meeting that this scheduled meeting should not go ahead.
6. Any Metro employee who chooses not to attend an investigation interview or disciplinary meeting that they were given reasonable notice of because of the unavailability of their support person or representative, risks the matters that are subject of the scheduled meeting being determined in their absence.

I hope this clarifies any confusion in respect to this matter.

Yours sincerely

Perry Ramsey
Trains Services Manager

Cc: All Metro Drivers

METRO TRAINS MELBOURNE
GPO Box 1880
Melbourne VIC Australia 3001

Telephone +61 3 9610 2400
www.metrotrains.com.au
ABN 49 136 429 348

Note Metro's acceptance of both the right to representation and that it considers 'reasonable notice' of a pending interview for the purpose of arranging representation is 3-5 business days. I would like to believe that Managers who acted contrary to the *Fair Work Act*, the *Dispute Settling Procedure* and Metro's own procedures would at least be reprimanded, but I'm not holding my breath.

Should a Manager attempt to pervert or ignore the *Fair Work Act* and/or the *Dispute Settling Procedure*, calmly

and politely restate your right to representation sighting the provisions already mentioned. Anytime a Manager attempts to implement a different procedure the status quo overrides this.

The penalties for breaching the *Fair Work Act* are as follows:

Section 1 - 60 penalty units.

Section 19 - 60 penalty units.

Section 405 (unfair dismissal) - 60 penalty units.

Currently Commonwealth penalty units are \$ 110.00.

In a "worse case" scenario for Metro, Fair Work Australia could find that two components of Section 19 had been breached resulting a maximum fine of \$26,400.

It seems that the conducting of improper interviews are often less about the actions of the accused than it is achieving the goal of frightening the workforce at large as we move toward the next Union Collective Agreement negotiations. It also demonstrates the Manager's "prowess" to those above him.

Drivers should also be aware that some Metro Managers will attempt to class ANY dispute they have with employees as "behavioural issues". This is because behavioural issues are the easiest path to dismissal. It's important to remember that a finding against you, no matter how trivial it seems at the time, will form part of a file that exists for your working life on the railways and could be used against you at a later date. It is **vital** that you not only have representation to ensure fair process but also as a non-hostile witness to proceedings.

Therefore, I can only re-emphasise the Union instruction that you must have representation at any interview or discussion with Management. We recommend you retain this article in your Union diary for future reference.

If you have any questions or need representation, contact the Union on 9682 1122.

ANONYMOUS AUTHOR

* * *

To Marc Marotta RTBU Locomotive Division.

I wish to advise that i am retiring from V/Line on March 30 2012 and therefore cease to be a member of the Victorian Division from that date. However as I have a Locomotive Driver position in Western Australia I will become a member of the RTBU in that state. I wish to thank all union officials for their help and assistance over the years as an engineman and in particular yourself and your brother John. I wish the Victorian Division and members all the best for the future. Regards

MARK MILNE

Where is it ...?

With Trevor Penn
Passenger Sub-Division, Southern Cross



THE previous *Where Is It ...?* [below right] was at Broadmeadows, looking in the Down direction. The photograph was taken by Charles Gavan Duffy. The winner was Laurie Reynolds (PN Intermodal). Congratulations.

Meanwhile if you think you know the location of the photograph on the *opposite* page, call the Union Office on 9682 1122 or toll free on 1800 134 095.

If you answer correctly (only one guess per competition) your name will go into a hat and the winners, one Sparks and one Loco, will be drawn two weeks from distribution of the current *Loco Lines*.

Prizes can include a **Union mug, or a cap. Good luck!**

SOME time around the dawn of the 20th century Charles Gavan Duffy, a teenage railway enthusiast, photographed rural Broadmeadows from the top of the Up Starting signal.

Empty paddocks stretch away to the horizon and in the middle distance is the combined wooden station building and SM's residence, one of a number on the North Eastern line, of which the Down side building at Wallan is the sole survivor.

The tall Home signal with its post pivoted arm displaying a half-hearted "All Right" aspect as it droops in the afternoon sun, probably dates from the duplication of the line from Essendon in 1885. The Camp Road crossing gates, their Keeper and his small abode dominate the foreground. These gates were removed in April 1906, only to be replaced in September 1916, most likely due to



the increased road traffic to the nearby military establishment, which was used as a "boot camp" for recruits enlisting to serve King and Country in the Great War.

The construction of the nice, new standard gauge line resulted in the installation of boom barriers on 7th December 1961, which lasted until the present overpass came into use on 25th January 1978. [LL](#)

Man of Steel

by Trevor Penn

Passenger Sub-division, Southern Cross

WE'RE back in the USSR during the Second World War in 1941–42, at the railway centre of Smolensk, 360 km south-west of Moscow.

In total contrast to the "hillbilly" attire of the civilian driver and his Fräulein firecreature depicted in our December issue, the "Lokführer" sports a neat German Army cap and greatcoat, supplemented by a woollen scarf as protection from the Russian Winter. This chap looks well content with his steed, for she is a prize acquisition despite her battered external condition. As the Russians retreated in the face of Hitler's invasion they usually left behind only small, obsolete locomotives, or wrecks, but here is a modern, powerful passenger engine *in working condition!*





Classleader IS 20-1, which entered service in 1932. “STALIN” in Cyrillic is painted underneath the headlight.

On the side of the cab (“der Führerhaus”) below the СССР and crossed hammer and shifting-spanner insignia of the Soviet Railways, 20 denotes the axle load in tonnes, while ИС are the Cyrillic initials of Iosif (“Joseph”) Stalin [born Iosif Dzhugashvili], the fearsome General Secretary of the Communist Party. When № 20-1 was completed at the Kolomna Shops in 1932, the workers at the plant voted to name the new class after Comrade Stalin, although one wonders at the fate of anyone who dissented ...

Based on current American practice, these 2-8-4 locomotives were equipped with a mechanical stoker to feed their 7 m² (75 square foot) grate, and a skylight illuminated the dark interior of their all-weather cab; the damaged remains of a skylight are visible in the cabside photo. They produced up to 2,400 kW (3,200 horsepower) on trials, and their maximum permissible speed was 120 km/h. In normal service speeds rarely exceeded 100 km/h but a Russian Express, at the end of a 60 hour journey, was expected to arrive on time *to the second!*


The Soviet track gauge of 1,520 mm (5 foot) caused logistical problems for the Germans, who rapidly converted it to standard 1,435 mm (4 ft 8½ in) gauge using vast amounts of forced labour, but when the tide of battle turned following the Red Army’s victory at Stalingrad in early 1943, the Russians soon altered it back.

Whether 20-113 survived the war is not known,

but nine years after Stalin’s death in 1953 the remaining locos of his namesake class became known as FДр; Felix Dzerzhinsky Passenger. “Iron Felix” was a most unsavoury character. He was a Polish Communist who experienced a rough time in the Tsarist prisons. As the first director of the Cheka, the Bolshevik secret police and a forerunner of the KGB, he was responsible for mass executions during the Red Terror and the Russian Civil War. The FD class 2-10-2 freight locos named in his honour shared many components, including boilers, with the former Iosif Stalins.

Soviet steam loco construction ceased abruptly in 1956 following the removal from office of Lazar Kaganovich, the energetic Commissar of Transportation & Heavy Industry and his disgrace for stubbornly insisting on the development of steam traction.

The 36,000 (!) locomotives were scrapped or stored as a strategic reserve, and only one of the 650 strong IS/FДр class survives. 20-578 is stuffed and mounted in gaudy “fairground” colours on an enormous plinth near the main station at Kiev, in the former Soviet Republic of Ukraine.

Information obtained from Wikipedia, and Russian Steam Locomotives by H. M. Le Fleming and J. H. Price, published by David & Charles, 1972. 

AFA: SICKNESS & ACCIDENT COVER
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AGAINST SICKNESS OR AN ACCIDENT

VARIOUS LEVELS OF COVER ❖ **GROUP POLICY No: 5105228**

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- ❖ **PLUS:** \$10,000 ACCIDENTAL DEATH BENEFIT, AT NO EXTRA COST (AUTOMATICALLY INCLUDES YOUR SPOUSE)
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- ❖ PAID IN ADDITION TO SICK LEAVE AND WORKERS COMPENSATION (UP TO 100% GROSS EARNINGS)
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EXCLUSION: ALL PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS – PLEASE READ PDS FOR ALL EXCLUSIONS
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I D.O.B:/...../..... SEX: ☐
Hereby authorise you to deduct from my salary or wages payable to me in respect of my employment, the amount of

\$..... from salary or wage being for the AFA: SICKNESS & ACCIDENT **GROUP POLICY No: 5105228** and to remit the amount deducted to: AFA Pty. Ltd. All amounts remitted on my behalf pursuant to this authority shall be deemed to be payments by me personally. This Authority is to continue until such time as it is withdrawn by me in writing. In consideration to your consenting to make such deductions and payments as above, I agree for myself, my executors, administrators and assigns to hold the RTBU, my employer and every employee thereof, harmless and indemnified against any claim arising out of any act or omission in pursuance of this authority or any failure to make deductions and remittances as authorised herein. We agree to this deduction being varied, by amount or new payee, subject to agreement by my employer

SIGNATURE: X DATE:/...../.....

ADDRESS: SUBURB: P/CODE:

PHONE: (03) MOBILE: EMAIL:

EMPLOYEE No: OCCUPATION: EMPLOYER:

\$16.00 Fortnightly for \$200 Weekly BENEFIT **\$17.60** Fortnightly for \$250 Weekly BENEFIT **\$23.62** Fortnightly for \$300 Weekly BENEFIT
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ADAMS (James T.)
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 ANDERSON (Sherwood)
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RAIL, TRAM & BUS UNION VICTORIA

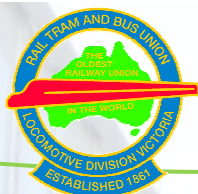
LOCOMOTIVE DIVISION

RTBU Embroidered Merchandise Price list

Available only at Loco Hall

	Name of Item	Price
	Polar Fleece zip up jumper Color logo	\$48.00 each
	Sweat Jumper (Dark Blue) Color logo	\$45.00 each
	Polo T-shirts (Dark Blue) Color logo	\$42 each
	Bomber Jackets (Dark Blue with Leather look sleeves) Color logo By special order	\$105.00 each
	Caps With small yellow RTBU logo	\$7.95 each
	Mugs	\$3.50 each
	Badges	\$3.50 each
	Keyrings	\$3.50 each

*Images for informative purposes only – merchandise may slightly differentiate



RAIL, TRAM & BUS UNION VICTORIA

LOCOMOTIVE DIVISION

Membership Form

I..... the undersigned hereby apply to become a member for the Australian Rail, Tram & Bus Industry Union, An Organisation of Employees registered under the Australian *Industrial Relations Act* 1988 as amended, and hereby undertake to comply with the rules and by-laws for the time being of the union.

Mr Mrs Ms (Cross out which is not applicable)

Surname:..... Given Name:.....

Address:..... Post Code:.....

Home Ph. No:..... Mobile:..... Date of Birth:...../...../.....

Employer:..... Employee Number:.....

Date Commenced:..... Grade:.....

Location:..... Work Address:.....

Work Ph. No:..... Work Fax No:.....

I certify that I have received a copy of rule 14, Notification of Registration from Membership

Date:...../...../..... Signature:.....

Please keep the following for your reference.)

- A member may resign from membership of the Union by written notice addressed and delivered to the Secretary of his/her branch.
- A notice of resignation from membership of the Union takes effect:
 - On the day on which the notice is received by the Union; or
 - On the day specified in the notice, which is a day not earlier than the day when the member ceases to be eligible to become a member, whichever is later; or
 - In other cases;
 - At the end of three months; or
 - On the day which is specified in the notice: Whichever is later.
- Any subscription, fees, fines and levies owing but not paid by a former member of the Union in relation to a period before the member's resignation took effect, may be sued for and recovered in the name of the Union in a Court of competent jurisdiction, as a debt to the Union.
- A notice delivered to the Branch Secretary shall be deemed to have been received by the Union when it was delivered.
- A notice of resignation that has been received by the Union is not invalid because it was not addressed and delivered to the Branch Secretary.
- A resignation from membership of the Union is valid even if it is not effected in accordance with this Rule if the member is informed in writing by or on behalf of the Union that the resignation has been accepted.

Level 14, 222 Kings Way, South Melbourne. 3205 | Phone: 9682 1122 Freecall: 1800 134 095 | Fax: 9682 3344 | Email: rtbu@iprimus.com.au