



# RT&BU LOCOMOTIVE DIVISION LOCO LINES

Newsletter for Locomotive Enginemen of the  
Rail, Tram & Bus Union- Victoria

EDITION 55 SEP 2012

## **DIVISIONAL EXECUTIVE**

### **DIVISIONAL SECRETARY:**

### **DIVISIONAL PRESIDENT:**

### **DIVISIONAL ASSIST. SECRETARY:**

### **DIVISIONAL VICE PRESIDENT:**

Marc Marotta 0414 897 314

Terry Sheedy 0417 310 400

Jim Chrysostomou 0404 814 141

John Marotta 0404 814 273

## **DIVISIONAL DELEGATES**

### **Metropolitan Sub-division:**

Kevin Duggan 0404 811 589

Paris Jolly 0422 790 624

### **Pacific National Sub-division:**

Peter Laux 0417 526 544

### **Pacific National (ex Freight) Sub-division:**

James Styles 0427 018 963

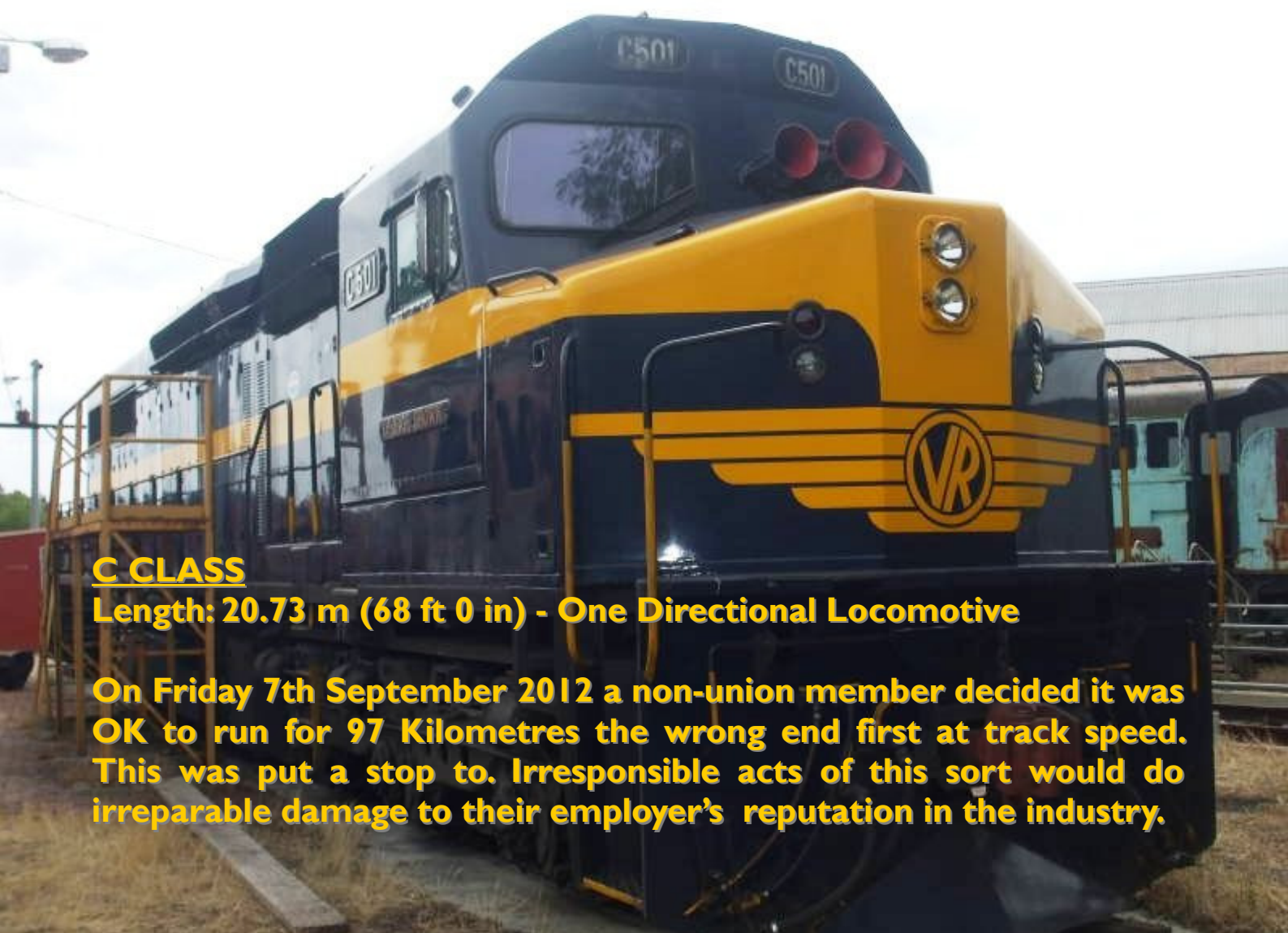
### **Passenger Sub-division:**

Wayne Hicks 0407 035 282

## **C CLASS**

**Length: 20.73 m (68 ft 0 in) - One Directional Locomotive**

**On Friday 7th September 2012 a non-union member decided it was OK to run for 97 Kilometres the wrong end first at track speed. This was put a stop to. Irresponsible acts of this sort would do irreparable damage to their employer's reputation in the industry.**



# Loco LINES

EDITION 55  
SEP 2012

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## Publisher

Marc Marotta

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## Marc Marotta — Locomotive Divisional Secretary



### Vline

Enterprise negotiation time is probably the busiest period for union office officials. At the time of writing, V/Line negotiations have stalled because of two obstacles.

The first is the quantum of the pay rise, whilst the Locomotive Division accepts that in the value for an across the board pay rise there may be some overflow to other areas of the union from Locomotive Division workplace efficiencies and changes in work practices. How much over flow is the question.

This issue had been raised by a number of drivers at union meetings. Members of the Locomotive Division that hold the view that no overflow should be accepted need to come to terms with (as I have had to) the fact that this may be part of the territory of an amalgamated Union.

This issue of amalgamation was dealt with about 3 years ago under the previous office bearers and the members voted for amalgamation, that should end any further complaints about the situation. But in my view that does not mean the magnitude of the overflow of value from any division of the union to other parts of the union can't be an issue. In the V/Line case it still remains a matter to be resolved.

The second issue is the weekend penalty payment for Locomotive Drivers. Since 1995 the introduction of the aggregate wage in which the then low level of weekend work was calculated and was part of the aggregate wage. Locomotive Drivers have seen a steady increase in the frequency of weekend work, which has now reached a maximum level of every second weekend rostered to work. This matter must be resolved for Locomotive Division if there is to be a new Enterprise Agreement. The current position for the Locomotive Division is if these matters are not resolved, there will be no new agreement and the current agreement should be rolled over with no change to our conditions and work practice.

If V/Line wishes to propose new work practice changes at a later date with the Locomotive Division, there is provision in the Fair Work Act to vary an Industrial Agreement, and this will require the members to vote on any proposed variation and the value.

### Metro

The Metro Agreement has been sent to Fair Work Australia for certification. Against all expectations, including my own, we have been able to re-negotiate the fundamentals for a driver to have some quality of life both on and off the job. The determinate for any drivers working life is rostering; thanks to efforts of Jim Chrysostomou, Paris Jolly and Terry Sheedy.

A roster code has been re-established at the metro electric running depots, which defines what can be done and what can't

by management and drivers.

The second item to re-establish was a driver's training course. The first two parts of the new train driver's course is now 73 weeks with an emphasis on certain aspects of driving duties. Provided the first two parts of the course go according to plan, a new driver will be fully qualified including all route knowledge for metro systems at the earliest after 99 weeks training.

The one thing that we failed to re-capture was the fault management protocol. This F.M.P. Agreement and I have some history. It was the first matter that I took to the old Industrial Relations Commission in 1996, which the electric running depot receiving a 6% increase in wages. Unfortunately, the current union officials were put in a position of having to retake lost ground, and the turmoil and acrimony with Metro over these items has been the real reason for the attacks on Terry Sheedy, Jim Chrysostomou, Paris Jolly and I over the last 18 months.

If Metro had been successful in neutralising the current office bearers, Metro could have used their often repeated mantra that only business needs would dictate the standard of your work conditions, such as hours of work and what training standards that would apply in the work place, rather than a balance between employees' rights and business imperatives.

This situation was brought about by previous office bearer's inexplicable failure to incorporate the existing standards for rostering, driver training, fault management in the 2009 Enterprise Agreement that were included in the previous agreements prior to them taking office.

### Privatisation

Country Link will be the first Rail Enterprise in N.S.W. to be privatised. The corporatization of Country Link was completed some time ago. Rumours abound about when this is to happen and vary from 'it should of already happened', with a policy of privatisation for all it's Public Transport in N.S.W. of which Country Link is the most advanced for the process of privatisation. Whilst we had two state governments of different political colour, the likely hood of the Victorian government ceding ownership of Rolling Stock was remote. Now we have two right wing state governments in power with shared views about privatisation it's much simpler for them to come to an agreement. Locomotive Division has become aware of inter-governmental discussions to assist the N.S.W Government in its agenda of privatisation, at this stage this is unconfirmed.

A meeting was held with the National Secretary Mr. Bob Nanva, T. Dobbyn and myself at which this matter was discussed and the National Secretary was going to try and get some additional information. If this proves to be correct there will be little likelihood of retaining Victorian Locomotive Drivers on the X.P.T. service.

When I reflect on this scenario, it seems unlikely, once Country Link is fully privatised, that a private company will receive a subsidy from a N.S.W liberal government for a passenger service into Victoria for the price of one set of 30 year old Rolling Stock of the X.P.T. But speculation what maybe is probably unproductive at this stage. In discussions with V/Line management about this matter, they have been candid. They would be happy to remove the V/Line drivers from the X.P.T. This is the situation as it stands at the moment and we will keep you informed of developments.



# Have you been exposed to **Asbestos?**

Locomotive enginemmen 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](http://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](http://mauriceblackburn.com.au)

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss Surname		Given names	Date of birth
Number	Street	Suburb	
Postcode	State	Email address	
Telephone – home		Mobile	

### 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

**Maurice  
Blackburn**  
Lawyers  
Since 1919

We fight for fair:

# President's Paragraphs

by Terry Sheedy  
Divisional President



## Political Low

Australian Politics must be at their lowest ebb in 60 or 70 years. Voters appear to not want either of the leaders of the two major parties because the quality in the Australian Parliament has eroded to personalities, muckraking and real kids' stuff. Julia Gillard's Labor Party that was born from the Union Movement but certainly doesn't represent the working class in lots of aspects. In 2010 we were attacked in our Award System, there were 'too many' they said, so they stripped our award bare and you wouldn't even recognise it now as there is no mention of Locomotive Enginemen in the modern award.

The Mining Tax was supposed to pay for the Employers increase from 9 to 12 % on the Superannuation Levy, we heard that from Labor Minister Bill Shorten, as he introduced it in Parliament last November with the RTBU National Council members in the visitors' gallery. Now we are told that the increase had to be bargained by the Unions during Enterprise Bargaining Agreement negotiations.

The other damning legislation attacks the salary sacrificing by workers to their superannuation by cutting the maximum amount from \$50,000 per year to \$25,000 per year which includes the Employers contributions. The Government want retirees off the old age pension and to become self-funded retirees so what do they do, they stop/reduce workers from salary sacrificing to do just that, becoming self-funded retirees.

The other big blunder this Labor Government has made is being the Yanks puppets for an unwinnable war in Afghanistan. It's a civil war not unlike Vietnam which the Labor Party strongly opposed when in opposition; Arthur Calwell must turn in his grave. The Australian Defence Force are given the task of training Afgan soldiers who then turn on them (and murder them). Even the Yanks are pulling out of Afghanistan ahead of Australia, what's that tell you; they know that it's an unwinnable war and a mighty expensive one at that, life wise and dollar wise, shame on both political parties, shame.

Now lets look at the other mob, the Liberal Party led by Tony Abbott who wants to reintroduce Work Choices legislation again (the current Government didn't clean out all of little Johnny's Work Choice legislation either). The Liberals intend to attack Union and workers conditions, they want and will remove workers weekend penalty rates, shift penalty rates, reduce annual leave, public holidays and long service leave. The Liberals only look after their fatcat mates who donate huge sums of money to their party to make the rich get richer and the poor get poorer, that's the way they like it because they can control everybody

then. Lets look at the Ballyhoo Liberal Government and the Campbell Liberal/National Party in Queensland and what they stand for with all their spin which is another work for lying.

Both Governments don't give a rats about employment levels, they are sacking a hundred thousand public servants the same as Kennett, closing and selling off Tafe Colleges, increasing University fees, cutting funding from C.F.A and M.F.B by hundreds of millions of dollars, tell teachers they will be the best paid in Australia and offer them the large sum of 2.5 % per year for 3 years; it's another case of I am alright, Jack Stiff you.

The Liberals are hell bent on that they must have a budget surplus and it doesn't matter how many workers lose their jobs, their Houses and families are torn apart as we only look after the rich.

Workers are coming out of the closet, they wouldn't dare once, but they do now tell you that they voted Liberal.

They call it democracy but let me say that they are two bob millionaires who are footing themselves because if it wasn't for Trade Unions we would all be working for Gina Rinehart or \$2 a day, so don't kid yourselves. You workers who vote for the Liberals when your wages and working conditions are stripped away you won't be telling your workmates that you voted liberal, you will be getting back in the closet.

Now what is the answer to the poor quality of politics, what we need is to return to the grassroots of Unionism and get the Labor Party to return to its values and that is to fully represent the working class and the underprivileged, get out and talk and see people in the workplace instead of listening to the ill-informed advisers and the silvertail consultants.

If only one could wish and make it come true, well I am off to the wishing well.



Above Picture: At the ACTU Congress Sydney , from left Victroian Locomotive Divisional President Terry Sheedy, Former (Labor) Prime Minister Bob Hawke and National Assistant Secretary Locomotive Division Geoff Ralph.



# Assistant Secretary

**Jim Chrysostomou**  
**Divisional Ass. Secretary**



## **Negotiations...**

The dissemination of information during the negotiation of an Enterprise Agreement (EA) is limited on the basis that the situation is liquid, that means until such time as you have a final document there is nothing solid to report back to the membership. Once a document is completed and ready to be perused by those who it affects the legal requirement is that the EA has to be in the workplace for 7 days before it can be voted on. Bearing that in mind an employer can put any agreement in the workplace that can be voted on once notice period requirements in the Fair Work Act (the Act) have been satisfied. It is the responsibility of the Union in this case to either endorse or speak against the document.

## **Metro Agreement 2012-2015...**

This year saw the expiration of the two passenger agreements (V/Line and Metro). Out of those agreements Metro was by far going to be the most difficult to negotiate a fair and equitable outcome for the membership given the neglect and lack of due diligence applied by the previous office bearers. There were significant deficiencies in the 2009-2012 Metro agreement with no coverage for fundamental conditions or rather bread and butter conditions. The harsh reality that had to be overcome by the negotiation team for the new Enterprise Agreement (EA) was that there was no protection for Driver Training, no protection for Drivers Rostering Conditions (Roster Code) and no protection for Driver Accreditation amongst other inadequacies.

After approximately three months negotiation along with forty to fifty appearances before Fair Work Australia since Metro Trains Melbourne commenced operation of the metropolitan franchise, an agreement was struck that now protects training, rostering, Driver accreditation and even a disciplinary process.

I would like to say that what took place at the sparks from 2006 to 2010 was merely personalities but that is not the case; and how do you protect Drivers in all the Victorian rail operations from a similar scenario in the future, there is only one way and that is to make the role for people that are charged with the responsibility of protecting our conditions as Drivers fool proof and the only way to achieve that is not to elect fools to do the job.

## **V/Line Agreement 2012-2015...**

The V/line negotiations are progressing at glacial speeds with the government owned and operated business (as opposed to the arms length (Government responsibility) spark privatisation model).

V/Line are seeking to make considerable changes to working conditions at the bargain rate of 2.5% per annum set by government policy or with efficiencies an additional 1% per annum return.

Whilst negotiations are progressing with representatives of the operator one thing that is evident in both passenger agreements is that the bulk of efficiencies come from the Driving Grade and any return to the grade diminishes with amalgamation.

## **Heritage Trains...**

Due to an unfounded complaint made by a disgruntled member that led to an application being made to Fair Work Australia and another member's dodgy safety declarations, V/Line sought legal advice on the responsibilities imposed upon it as a quasi-employer and in relation to public liability insurance.

These matters are currently being assessed for Heritage Crews on trains and could be in jeopardy because of selfish and irrational agendas by individuals at the expense of everyone else.

## **Union Membership...**

Being a Union member of the Locomotive Division is of great importance when an agreement expires but also throughout your Driving career, the best way to explain membership is that it's like insurance except better because there is a continual return to members and as a collective, especially when a member finds themselves in the sight of a belligerent management.

The strength of any good Union comes from the unity of the membership.

Nothing undermines the strength of a Union more than members trying to negotiate or participate in changes to the workplace (whether the intent is innocent, malicious or self-serving) on their own behalf that has the potential to affect the entire work force. It is a breach of the Union rules, Roman numeral "X" if a member does the following:

*"Violate or attempt to violate the terms of any applicable industrial Award or Agreement or enter into or attempt to enter into any agreement with any employer or an employee thereof contrary to the provisions of an applicable Award or Agreement;"*

What has been happening at some of the operators is that management have been approaching Drivers to participate in the development of various workplace "Initiatives" these Drivers are then used as a means to try and push through work place changes.

The membership has to be aware of this practice adopted by management that are dressed up in many forms e.g. Driver mentor programs, focus groups etc, etc. Any Driver that participates in this process does nothing but hinder or damage the ability of elected Union Official's to maintain and improve the work place conditions.

In war times collaborators with the enemy were dealt with very harshly.

Members that do collaborate should be put on notice that the Union takes a very dim view to those who seek to damage or change conditions or agreements that have been negotiated by those charged with the responsibility and any person found to be in breach may have their membership revoked.

What does having your membership revoked mean?, No insurance, no protection of your workplace rights, you are left to the mercy of the conscience of the employer and we all know how fair they are, that's why there is no need for any employment laws or minimum safety nets and Unions are becoming redundant because the employer believes in a fair days pay for a fair days work just ask Ms Gina Reinhart who thinks Australia should be more competitive with other parts of the world giving the example of African mining works earning as much as \$2 a day.

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



## **Standard gauge**

Working on the North east is still an issue with passenger services running late every day due to the amount of speed restriction in place due to the very poor track conditions with freight trains still dividing.

## **Medical standards**

New medical standards will come into place with more stringent items being Body Mass Index (BMI) and Sleep Apnoea testing. Should drivers tick the right boxes, you will go for a sleep apnoea test for two days, and then begs the question of who pays?

With the new stringent medicals, drivers around the country will be knocked out and trains cancelled all over the country. Members will be informed when more details come to hand.

Operators and bureaucrats are taking advantage of the new national rail safety laws in a race to diminish the fatigue management systems into the new national laws, to the detriment of train crews, this will mean more time at work less and time of between shifts and the list goes on, all about profit margins for shareholders at our expense.

NTC and rail operators argue that their laws provide a 'safety net' and there is no need for legislated limits on shift lengths.

Along with this is the drug and alcohol testing, this is once again taking the more invasive approach to urine testing instead of taking the most effective and quick approach of saliva swabs. This is a result of the National transport commission setting the bench mark for driver's medicals standards across Australia. Check the standards out on the NTC website and then use the NTC search engine and put in "[national standards for health assessment of rail safety workers.](#)" The new criteria will be available from July 2012 on the web site and not sure of the implantation date.

## **Train order review**

Train order review is almost complete with a risk assessment to be completed in early July, followed by the roll out shortly after. More training will then be required.

## **Fuel point at Southern Cross**

The fuel point at Southern Cross has been upgraded with the grates removed and replaced with concrete and new fuel point arms for better ergonomics, and new high speed fuel pumps.

Once the concrete has cured rubber matting will be placed over the concrete.

## **Enterprise Negotiations**

Enterprise negotiations have commenced for V/LINE and the membership will be advised as the UCA develops.

## **Membership fees**

With the financial year ended the memberships claim for taxation purposes for the full financial year ending 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012 is:

Qualified drivers	\$876.20
Part time/ job share drivers	\$585.00
Trainee (under 12 months)	\$430.30
Trainee (over 12 months)	\$561.60

Train crews are reminded if you have changed your address please contact the union office on 96821122 so that your details can be updated, also applies if you have changed companies. or qualified.

## **Qualified Drivers**

Congratulations to the new recently qualified drivers at V/LINE:

H Loam, L Boag, D Walker, M Davis, J Hill, B Chiswell, T Sutherland, A Mcneice, and M Tobin

The next group of trainee's should be qualified as drivers by the end of the year. A new internal class of eight trainees have also commenced training.

## **Queensland Rail**

QR have vacancies for five mainline drivers in Melbourne based at North Dynon to commence straight away, should anyone be interested please contact Lindsey Mitchell train crew co-ordinator on 0428710761

## **Pacific National**

Graincorp had announced that they will not use radios



for train movements for the loading of wheat vehicles, this has been an ongoing work practise that has been in place for many years.

Why Graincorp had stopped this practise is anyone's guess. As a result Pacific national had issued a work instruction for train crews for the second person to stand out in the elements to place vehicles as required.

As a result a provisional improvement notice was issue to PN of which they did nothing about and this elapsed, followed by another Pin notice. Not until the last day of the pin notice a meeting was conducted in Maryborough with Pacific National and Graincorp, in which Pacific National would not allow people from the divisional office to attend. This meeting had gone all day with the members informing the division during the course of the day, with no clear indication of how the train crew were to deal with standing out in the weather elements.

Work safe had been contacted and no inspector had returned calls, finally a cease work was issued to PN and as a result the placement of wagons at the worksite was the best outcome and the locomotive would stand aside and Graincorp would then gravity feed the vehicles.

The Work safe inspector was called in and last week a site inspection was completed with Work safe. The short version was this is unacceptable for train crews to stand out in the elements so Work Safe have issued orders that some sort of shelter should be provided.

As this is an ongoing saga the members will be informed as the matter develops, and the members at Maryborough have done a great job in ensuring the health and safety of the members.

### **Some lighter reading**

The picture to the right has been widely seen by many, but as to how this occurred was unsure.

Here is an accurate account, *Paris, Gare De L'ouest (France) 1895*

On October 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1895 at 1600, the Granville-Paris local passenger train no 56 of the then French western railway, consisting of the locomotive, two luggage vans, a postal van, two first class, four second-class, and five third class coaches, fourteen vehicles in total.

The speed of the train prior to impact was 45km/h striking the buffers at the end of the platform, and then proceeding through a metre thick wall at the end of the terminus.

Landing ten metres below onto the foot path, it wrecked a newspaper shop of which the proprietress was killed; the driver and fireman were not injured as they had jumped prior to exiting the wall and minor injuries to the passengers.

The cause of the accident was a defect with the Westinghouse brake.



## FOREWORD

Uniform standards and practices in the use of signs, markings and other devices at railway crossings is essential in the interests of safety for both rail traffic and road users.

Essential to this compliance is an understanding of the risks inherent at railway crossings. Long, heavy freight trains and high-speed passenger trains constitute a massive energy source that can be highly destructive. Trains, even those moving relatively slowly, cannot be stopped anywhere near as readily as road traffic and this factor may not be apparent to some road users. It is imperative that vehicle occupants do not come into contact with such large energy sources and that road users recognize the need and are given every opportunity to give way to trains.

Problems associated with long and heavy road vehicles can influence both the location and safe operation of crossings. Long and heavy vehicles with slow acceleration from the stopped position can, when sight distance along the railway is poor, have difficulty starting up and clearing a crossing before the arrival of a previously unseen train unless there is some form of active control to warn that a train is coming. Likewise, long vehicles can present problems if there is an intersection or other vehicular check point close to the crossing on the departure side and the rear of such a vehicle inadvertently fails to clear the conflict area. Appropriate solutions need to be considered for all of these conditions.

Before any works, features or devices (e.g. pedestrian crossing, bus stop, intersection control, temporary works site) are introduced in the vicinity of a railway crossing, which could cause road traffic to queue across the crossing, the relevant rail and road authorities should confer to determine the most suitable method of handling the situation.

Other problems such as ill-defined crossings which may occur within freight loading areas, and crossings which are only used seasonally or indeed very rarely at any time of the year may present operational and management challenges that can only be partially met (if at all in some cases) by application of this Standard.

Railway crossings should be located to avoid sub-standard geometric features of the road, such as sub-standard curves, reduced pavement widths and vertical obstructions. If this cannot be avoided, special attention should be given to the signing and marking of these features as well as the railway crossing itself. Sub-standard geometric features can lead to increased numbers of crashes not involving trains as well as having an effect on the incidence of vehicle/train collisions.

The Standard does not provide guidance on when a crossing should progress from one hierarchical step in the type of control to the next, i.e. passive control to active control and active control to elimination. Such guidance can be found in risk assessment models such as ALCAM\*.

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\* Australian Level Crossing Assessment Model

# V/Line Pass O.H&S Report

By R Hall & H Hand

An upgrade of the dysfunctional car sidings fuel point has taken place with benefits for us i.e. suspended fuel hoses, removal of problem grates, raising fuel counter and improved indicator warning lights. There are also benefits for management with the high speed pumps turned online.

But the upgrade has fallen short with no extension of the shelter leaving crews exposed to the weather elements whilst fuelling, this issue is yet to be addressed with management warned about possible delays during weather exposure.

The RDS's are training crews on how to operate the new high speed pumps. A temporary fill in grid is in 4 road waiting for a concrete slab to be poured to rail height and we've been promised a wash basin with hot & cold water on 3&4 roads.

It's good to finally see some of these issues addressed after being listed years ago by the oh&s reps.

The next project for Southern Cross yards should be the pathway upgrade with the rubber pads for problem high maintenance areas raised as a solution by the OH&S reps back in 2008.

Funding for upgrades of existing infrastructure usually falls short of what is required to complete the job so areas may have to be prioritised.

The crater grease has finally been removed from roads 12 to 17 in the Bank sidings but with no ongoing controls as suggested once again by the driver's reps the same problems are going to repeat themselves.

The new bio wash at S/Dynon has completed its 1 month trial period with issues raised by Cab committee and Drivers oh&s reps to be addressed. It appears the bio washing done at Newport is a lot more thorough than the process at S/Dynon with some units having to return to the bio wash at S/Dynon for a second go.

More modifications are taking place on the new carriage wash plant at Dynon with further trials/tests to take place before the wash plant is commissioned.

In the near future we will be stabling trains in 6 & 7 roads of the storage yard until the RRL upgrade project in the Arrivals is complete.

There are still issues to be addressed with the new depot

building @ S/Cross (built to the minimum building code standards) on the brighter side the lift hasn't broken down since the upgrade with heavier running gear. Windows have been installed on doors to the stairwells on all levels. As far as the air con goes it looks like an ongoing problem requiring ongoing attention to provide acceptable comfort levels.

With the recent asbestos concerns on pre 1980 built rolling stock Drivers reps have demanded Vline management take action to identify and have their rolling stock assessed for asbestos containing materials and develop an asbestos register. The assessments have finally been completed on 18 Vline loco's and 3 PCJ vans and surprise surprise acm's were identified /detected on power contactors, arc chutes and some gaskets on "Y", "N", "A" & "P" class loco's and also in electrical back board panels on "Y" class loco's. No acm's were identified on the PCJ power vans or on an "N" & "H" carriage set previously tested.

The acm's identified on the loco's were non friable and assessed as low risk to the crews if of course not disturbed, we've requested a meeting with Vline safety to go over these assessments for awareness and ongoing management.



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## NELSON'S COLUMN

By Ernie Nelson V/Line Passenger Spencer Street.

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 Mate! Email me at [booze.up@myplace.come.ok](mailto:booze.up@myplace.come.ok) or call toll free 1800 SOD ORF. :-)

Any similarities between depicted and real events and people in some sections of this column is purely coincidental, so get over it, use this as therapy and get on with your life, Sport!

### My Opinion on Redundancies at the Sparx.

I read in Jim Chrysostomou's Column in the March 2012 Issue, that the Chinese Communist/Hong Kong Governments' majority owned company that are running the Sparx have decided to reinstitute a NX Tradition and are going to have a good old fashioned Christmas Chainsaw Massacre, Christmas is early this year so the Turkeys must've called an early election. Maybe they'll be good enough to do what NX did and get carried away and lop their own heads off.

I wonder who's gonna get it first, there are several possibilities I s'pose, if I was the Company Officer charged with this job, this is how I would go about it.

I would look at the following positions with extreme prejudice: The fellow who advised that if we try decapitate the Union all the Drivers will quit the Union to save their jobs and we'll get an easy run, howzat working so far, not well at all.

I would then look at the Manager who advised Metro to replace the tried and tested Fault Management Protocol (FMP) with the current system of Engineering Standards which seems to, in my view, rely more on coercion and harrying than Standards.

I would go through Personnel like Napalm on Steroids for, seemingly to me, changing a happy workplace that people wanted to retire in that has now degenerated into a mass exodus of all grades seeking new employers, 17% of Spark Drivers have now applied for positions with other operators around Australia and more have indicated they also will apply for these Railways.

I would also eliminate the position of Out-Station Driver Manager as it does not seem to serve any useful purpose and generates an atmosphere of distrust and loathing that also can create disharmony of a nature that will not bode well. These people were advised do not take Common Law Contracts, anyway sup with the Devil and reap your richly deserved rewards in Hell.



### Way Back When Grandad Rode The Rails.

Picture this if you please, it's about 10 a.m. on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September, 1854. The very first train to run in Australia is in transit from Flinders Street Station to Port Melbourne, the Driver turns to his Fireman and says, "You know Mate, the job's pharqued", Its true mate, look it up, I had to.

### Business 101.

Dad: I want you to marry a girl of my choice.

Son: No.

Dad: The girl is Bill Gates' daughter.

Son: OK!

Dad goes to Bill Gates:

Dad: I want your daughter to marry my son.

Bill Gates: No way! Do I know you?

Dad: My son is the CEO of the World Bank.

Bill Gates: OK! We can arrange for them to meet.

Dad goes to the president of World Bank:

Dad: Appoint my son as the CEO of your bank.

President: No!

Dad: He is the son-in-law of Bill Gates.

President: Hmmm. OK!

**THIS IS BUSINESS.**

### New Trains.



Third Generation Vlocity Unit Trial Run.

(Actually an AEC Rail Motor sitting at Mornington Station pre 1950).

### Albury Track.

Having been placed on the Second Creature Roster at Sodden Crotch Station I get to go to Albury at least once a week until DOO allegedly starts on 21/4/12, big whoop I hear you say.



N 470 waits at Albury while the Sydney-Melbourne Bionic Worm pulls in.  
Photo by Warren Banfield

When describing the track the best I can do is paraphrase Wodonga (soon to be Albury) Driver Ray Hills and say "It's as rough as guts, mate." And "You wont need a hanky coz It'll shake the snot outta ya." For those members at the Sparx it is like being on an Xtrapolis train for 317 Kilometres although the North-east is a far better ride than a XCrapper.

How the bloody hell did John Blunderby's Hard Right Ultra Neo-Conservative Laboral Party (perpetuated by the Red Ted Bailleu's New Progressive Labor Party) ever at all allow the Amateur Railway Train Crippleers (ARTC) to get away with the alleged upgrade of the Standard Gauge, furthermore the Canberra Ranga's got her paws in this as well.

Labor, Liberal/National or Greens as well as associated fellow travellers, none of 'em could organize a good time in a Bordello with a fist full of Hundred dollar bills.

Here's the good bit a further \$134,000,000.00¢ has been allocated by the Federal, NSW and Victorian Governments to "Upgrade Ballast Between Sydney and Melbourne" Let us see that's \$134M divided 960 KMs that equals about \$139,583.33¢ per Kilometre, that's a lot of rocks for a lot of coin.

I would suspect that it would also include the use of a large Mechanized Track Gang, including Undercutters, Tampers, Sleds, Ballast Cleaners and Trains, what else could it be when you've already spent \$1B already for side insertion of concrete sleepers on the NSW Great Southern Railway and the Victorian North-Eastern Railway, with the additional standardisation of the Broad Gauge Track from Seymour to Albury with associated track realignments along the way.

And don't get me started about Wodonga and Albury stations, Oh My Gawd have a look at 'em, Wodonga is

only on the west track so if Brainiac at Junee miscues you gotta wait a gazillion years for a rundown on the stick so you can have another go and at Albury the Back Platform (Old Broad Gauge Track) is so high someone's Granny is gonna do a hip and we'll have to shoot her.

You know they coulda given me the dough and I woulda pissed it up against the wall on the biggest spree since the 2<sup>nd</sup> AIF got back from New Guinea, but at least I could say I know what I'm doing.

### Rome.



Rome did not become great through holding meetings, Rome became great because she crushed all those that opposed her, I don't think there was a reason for it, it was just a Head Office policy thing.

### Engine in Trouble.

One day on the Isle of Ortem one of the engines named City of Dundee was in deep shizer for developing far to many faults in running so was called before the Fat Controller Monsieur Thrúshe Puppý and asked to explain why he should not be scrapped.

City of Dundee took the Big Engine from the Main Round House along with him for help, well the Big Engine told Monsieur Thrúshe Puppý that if Ortem Railways looked after their engines this shit would not happen so belt that in the bottom end of your one way digestive system.

When Big Engine and City of Dundee were leaving, Monsieur Thrúshe Puppý asked why are so many Engines leaving Ortem for places like the Isles of Vinel and Southern Nonyd or even the Wild West.

It was patiently explained to Monsieur Thrúshe Puppý if you treat your Engines like automatons and chattels, they will seek greener pastures, to which he replied "We're a good Railway to work for, aren't we?" Big Engine answered, "What was once good is no longer worthy of the efforts of Honest Engines".

Maybe all Engines should leave the Isle of Ortem if they are not happy.

*It's Every Drivers Mago. Remember it's your Mago too so write in on anything you like. Seeya later, Drive!*



Victoria was abandoned altogether because of multiple speed limits and the XPT was replaced by coaches between Wodonga and Melbourne.

DAVID MARCHANT, CEO, AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION: It is unfortunate that the speed restrictions had to be put on, but we have to weigh up the safety issues

against the issues of maintaining transit time.

MATT PEACOCK: There's disagreement about the cause of the line's parlous state, but even the chief executive of the ARCT, the Federal Government's Australian Rail Track Corporation, David Marchant, doesn't dispute the effect.

DAVID MARCHANT: It is a rough ride. The - and nobody would deny that, including me. The issue is that's the issue we need to rectify.

MATT PEACOCK: The problem is mud, mud that's pumped up between the new sleepers by pressure from the train wheels. This mud then washes the stone ballast away, leaving the concrete sleepers and the track exposed.

Since the concrete sleepers have been laid, according to the Rail, Bus & Tram Union, hundreds of new mud holes have appeared.

The union's loco drivers, who requested anonymity to safeguard their jobs, say they now worry about the safety of those on-board the trains.

ANONYMOUS TRAIN DRIVER II: It's frightening, and you know, you go to work each day and you are really concerned about if you're going to get to where you were going at the end of your shift.

ANONYMOUS TRAIN DRIVER: You're just driving your train normally and all of a sudden you hit this bad hole in the road or some track defect and it shakes the whole train around.

MATT PEACOCK: According to the ARTC, the mud holes responsible for the rough rides are the result of recent rain and were not caused by laying of the new sleepers.

DAVID MARCHANT: Many drivers have actually said the opposite, that the track's never been better since the concrete sleepers have been there.

ANONYMOUS TRAIN DRIVER II: I've been on the job for a hell of a lot of years and this is the worst - without a doubt, the worst that I have ever seen it.

MATT PEACOCK: The real mud hole problem, according to David Marchant, is confined to a section of Victorian track where inferior ballast was laid in the 1970s.

DAVID MARCHANT: Five years ago we spent about nine or 10 million dollars putting new ballast on top of the old ballast. We did that eight years ago as well. And what happened is the ballast has slowly sunk into these holes.

MATT PEACOCK: But the mud holes aren't just restricted to Victoria; they're north of the border as well.

Here at the tiny town of Tallong, the mud is so bad that you can scarcely see the sleepers and the trains coming through here had speed restrictions placed on them virtually ever since the sleepers were laid.

ANONYMOUS TRAIN DRIVER II: And there are sections of the track where you'll go for 100, 200, 300 metres, and all you'll see is

### Faulty Tracks.



**Broadcast:** 27/09/2010

**Reporter:** Matt Peacock

Despite a billion-dollar upgrade, train drivers are calling the Sydney to Melbourne railway a 'disaster waiting to happen' and are calling for an urgent inquiry into a problem that has crossed the state line.

### 7:30 Report Transcript.

KERRY O'BRIEN, PRESENTER: Here is a story about the train drivers calling for an urgent inquiry into the condition of the main Sydney-Melbourne railway line, which they describe as "a disaster waiting to happen".

Last month, speed restrictions became so pervasive on the Victorian leg of the journey that passengers had to go by bus between Wodonga and Melbourne, while a major freight carrier warned of potential injuries to drivers and damage to stock.

The rail union blames the Australian Rail Track Corporation for a bungled billion-dollar infrastructure upgrade, in which concrete sleepers replaced wooden ones, a claim the government-owned corporation denies, blaming instead decades-old faulty foundations on nearly a third of the Victorian track. But the 7.30 Report has also identified many examples of faulty track on the NSW side of the border.

Matt Peacock reports.

MATT PEACOCK, REPORTER: It's Australia's busiest rail line, linking the country's two largest cities with four XPT passenger services running daily between Sydney and Melbourne and up to 30 freight trains. But a multimillion-dollar infrastructure upgrade replacing wooden sleepers with concrete has train drivers and their union claiming the line is in worse condition than it's ever been.

BOB NANVA, RAIL, TRAM AND BUS UNION: Anyone that goes on any of those tracks will tell you that it shakes and it rattles and it rolls unlike any other track across Australia.

ANONYMOUS TRAIN DRIVER: The way the tracks are at the moment, it is a matter of time before a train derails.

MATT PEACOCK: Last month the freight operator Pacific National warned, "There is a high potential for rough track to cause injuries to drivers, damage to locomotives, wagons and loading."

The track conditions were so bad in fact that the passenger service in



mud coming up between the sleepers and the railhead. You cannot even see the ballast.

MATT PEACOCK: Further south in Wagga Wagga, Karen Brill noticed the difference in her house next to the railway line when the new sleepers were installed.

And what happens when a train comes through?

KAREN BRILL, WAGGA WAGGA RESIDENT: The whole track just bends and bows and the carriages just bounce along on there, and it's as scary as!

MATT PEACOCK: The ARTC blames a small mud hole it says it's now fixed. Karen Brill's lived here for 17 years, but it's only since the concrete sleepers were laid that trains began shaking the house. This video shot from her backyard shows how fast the trains go by.

KAREN BRILL: All the carriages just bounce and you can hear the carriages - well, not carriages; the containers more so, they just bounce all the way through. And it's so noisy. It's just - and it's very scary actually. You sort of think they're going to come off.

MATT PEACOCK: Although mud holes are clearly visible as far north as Tallong in NSW, the ARTC insists the problem's limited only to a section of the Victorian track.

DAVID MARCHANT: This problem is predominantly around 80 kilometres in the north-east line in Victoria and it's predominantly because the base foundations in the '70s on that track was not up to the standards that we'd normally require.

DAVE MATHIE, NSW RAIL, TRAM AND BUS UNION: And this is over the whole of that track between Sydney and Melbourne. It's not just an 80 kilometre stretch. If anybody from ARTC wants to ride in any of our trains, they will see that I'm not sitting here telling stories. It's a fact of life.

DAVID MARCHANT: During November and December in various sections of the track we're gonna go underneath and cut out the historical ballast that's still sitting there and replace it with the standard of ballast we normally use and therefore break the back of this problem forever.

MATT PEACOCK: Here, NSW RailCorp is installing new concrete sleepers on Sydney's light rail network, with the foundations carefully prepared before the sleepers are laid. According to the rail union's assistant NSW secretary Dave Mathie, himself a freight train driver on the southern line, the difference is obvious.

DAVE MATHIE: As you see on this train - as you'll see this is concrete sleepers done by RailCorp and wherever they've done it, it's done properly.

MATT PEACOCK: Smooth!

DAVE MATHIE: Smooth as. You can even put your cup up on the shelf.

MATT PEACOCK: You're sure about this?

DAVE MATHIE: Yeah, positive. I trust - but out in the country where ARTC have done up the track, you would never be able to do that.

MATT PEACOCK: Unlike RailCorp claims the union, the ARTC's used a far cheaper insertion method to lay its sleepers on the southern line.

DAVE MATHIE: When they pushed the sleeper - they pulled the old sleeper out, pushed the new sleeper in, the new concrete sleeper in, they've gotta dig away part of the base and they push away that foundation. Then they put the new ballast on top. It's a cheap and nasty way of laying concrete sleepers.

MATT PEACOCK: For drivers on the southern line the trip remains a nightmare where they fear the worst.

ANONYMOUS TRAIN DRIVER: It is a stuff up. These guys are s'posed to be Perway engineers. They're supposed to be able to fix the train tracks. But they're giving us a substandard tool to do our jobs.

ANONYMOUS TRAIN DRIVER II: If something is not done, and I mean very soon on this track, south of Sydney, something is going to happen, and it is going to be a major incident.

MATT PEACOCK: The ARTC flatly denies that an accident is likely, saying the trains are being constantly monitored and citing an August report from Worley Parsons which states, "... it is concluded that locomotive NR112 is not likely to derail during operations under the prevailing track conditions and speed regimen ..." At the time of that test though nearly 70 per cent of the Victorian line was subject to speed limits.

DAVID MARCHANT: Effectively the issue is that the safety is paramount, that's why there are speed restrictions.

MATT PEACOCK: It's yet another infrastructure bungle, warns the rail union, and heads should roll.

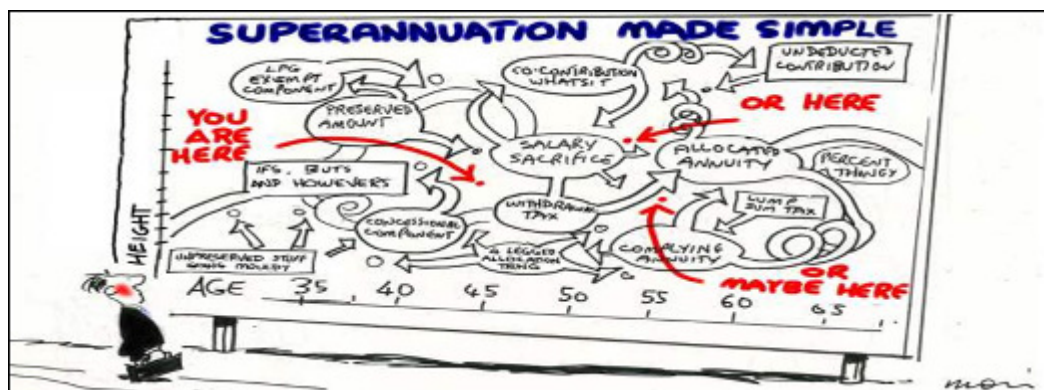
BOB NANVA: What we also think needs to happen is an independent inquiry and an audit of the work that has been undertaken by the ARTC to date using billions of dollars of taxpayers' money.

We've upgraded the track's performance quite substantially. So in an historical perspective, the reality is that mud holes were there and actually had quite significant effects pre-1998.

MATT PEACOCK: For the drivers who ride the track each day their question remains: will the line be fixed properly before a serious accident occurs?

ANONYMOUS TRAIN DRIVER II: It is nerve-racking; there's no doubt about that. And you knock off work of an evening and you think, "Oh, we made it today. I hope we make it home tomorrow."

KERRY O'BRIEN: That report from Matt Peacock



# The Sydney Morning Herald.

## They Built Her For Comfort, Not Speed, But She Could Still Give The XPT A Run For Its Money

April 15, 2012



Pomp ... guests prepared to board the inaugural Southern Aurora service to Melbourne at Central Station in April 1962.

**Fifty years after the first direct train trip from Sydney to Melbourne, the travel time has barely changed, writes Daniel Lewis.** "ALBURY, all change!" For nearly 80 years these three words were the curse of anyone catching the train between Sydney and Melbourne. David Burke, 84, remembers the freezing nights when he would drag his luggage across the platform at the border town because NSW and Victoria had built their rail systems on different gauges.

As Mark Twain observed of the old Albury break of gauge: "Think of the paralysis of intellect that gave that idea birth." But all that changed in April 1962 when the opening of the standard gauge line between Melbourne and Sydney led to the launch of the famous Southern Aurora, an Australian-built luxury overnight sleeper service which for the first time let passengers pass through Albury without changing trains. Mr Burke was on the first Aurora service as a journalist and has fond memories of the grand trip.

Just two years after the Aurora made its maiden journey, Japan launched the first of its Shinkansen "Bullet Train" high-speed rail lines. The trains now travel at up to 300km/h and the network, connecting most big cities, covers more than 2000 kilometres - enough track to connect Brisbane and Melbourne.

On board were the prime minister, the governor-general, the premiers of NSW and Victoria and railway officials - "all these blokes in penguin suits and women in long dresses".

Mr Burke also remembers a sense that the single-gauge line and the Southern Aurora represented a great step forward for the nation. But in the 50 years since, the Sydney-Melbourne route has produced no similar sensation. Services have gone backwards. There are still two trains each way each day between Sydney and Melbourne but they are not luxury, world-class trains like the Aurora was in its prime.

And then there are journey times. In 1962 the Aurora had a top speed of 130km/h and did the Sydney-Melbourne run in 13 hours - two hours and 10 minutes less than the old service.

These days the 959-kilometre Sydney-Melbourne run is conducted by XPTs, which have a top speed of 160km/h. But because of "mud holes" caused by drainage problems, the track is riddled with speed restrictions

and sometimes the speed is as low as 20km/h to ensure safety. They make the service slow and habitually late, Bob Newham of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union says.

Anyone getting on the 8.40 service at Central tonight will arrive in Melbourne at 7.35 tomorrow morning if the train is on time - a journey of 10 hours and 55 minutes.

But renewed debate about a second airport for Sydney has put focus back on building a high-speed rail line for Australia's east coast. The grand carriages of the old Southern Aurora are still in good condition, cared for by the volunteers of the NSW Rail Transport Museum. And tomorrow they will be back at Central so they can haul passengers to Melbourne to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Aurora's maiden journey.

Australia's greatest rail advocate, former deputy prime minister Tim Fischer, will address the passengers at Albury when the train stops there on Tuesday.

In a rally cry for constructing fast rail, he will tell them: "Celebrating the past is useful, but planning long-term for rail infrastructure is vital. I'm absolutely in support of high-speed rail. Australia needs the high-speed rail Brisbane-Newcastle-Sydney-Canberra-Albury-Melbourne."

Such a line would also take a great deal of pressure off Sydney Airport, according to Mr Fischer, because most flights in and out of the airport carried people within the same Melbourne-Brisbane corridor and the French experience showed most of those passengers would switch to high-speed rail if it became an option.

"We would be able to offer two hours 50 minutes [Sydney-Melbourne]," he said, adding that the existing Sydney-Melbourne line was "a shocker". "It's 11 or 12 hours on an XPT on a good day [Sydney-Melbourne]. Australia, because of its rundown interstate passenger train services, actually has more to gain by introducing high-speed rail than any other country in the world."

The Federal Government recently announced an extra \$134 million for upgrading ballast and drainage along the Sydney-Melbourne line to solve the mud-hole and speed-restriction problems.

In the meantime, despite many years of track upgrading, you still do not need a time machine to experience what life was like before the single gauge and Southern Aurora.

Anyone catching the XPT to Melbourne at Central at 7.42am today faces a trip the timetable says will take 12 hours and eight minutes because track work will require passengers to change to a bus - at Albury - for the rest of the journey to Melbourne.



The Southern Aurora in her halcyon days now passed into history, a true case of it wasn't broken so why fix it if it is ok.

## Employers push to cut pay, hours

Clay Lucas April 10, 2012

### Casual workers shunted in Fair Work review

EMPLOYERS have expanded their push to cut minimum working hours - in one case to as little as 90 minutes a day for school students - and to slash weekend pay for casuals.

They are also moving to abolish evening penalty rates and to narrow the definition of "shift work", according to submissions to a major review of the awards system being conducted by Fair Work Australia.

Unions, after analysing more than 200 submissions to the review, have accused employers of "merely laying the foundation" for an Abbott government to cut wages and conditions. "What employer groups want is a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week economy in which they have all the flexibility, the power and control over who works when and how little they are paid," said ACTU secretary Jeff Lawrence.

But employer groups say the push to reduce entitlements for some workers is a direct result of the Rudd and Gillard governments having allowed costs to dramatically escalate for businesses from 2009.

The Fair Work review will set future awards covering most jobs across Australia, and took submissions until last month.



The ACTU seized on a submission from the National Retail Association arguing in favour of reduced minimum hours for secondary school students employed as casuals. The retail group wants a Fair Work Australia decision last year for a 90-minute-a-day minimum for students to be expanded into other retail awards.

The ACTU also cited employer submissions arguing for:

- Reduced penalties for casual employees, particularly on weekends and public holidays.
- New annualised salary arrangements that would avoid payment of allowances, penalties and overtime.
- A narrowing of the definition of shift work to reduce access to pay and leave entitlements.
- Discounted rates for apprentices and trainees where adult rates have traditionally applied

Mr Lawrence said the submissions showed employers wanted a return to the former WorkChoices policies of the Coalition. "Australia's employer groups have never accepted the reality that WorkChoices-style laws were whole-heartedly rejected," Mr Lawrence said.

Australian Industry Group director of workplace relations Stephen Smith accused unions of trying to portray all employer requests as unreasonable.

He said the last review of awards across all industries - which was completed in 2009 and crunched over 1500 industry agreements down to 122 - had created a raft of problems for businesses.

Many employers were now struggling to cope with the increased costs. "For example, afternoon shift loadings in the glass industry increased from 15 per cent to 50 per cent ... and the new loadings are having a major negative impact on the industry," Mr Smith said.

Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief executive Peter Anderson said the unions' analysis had misleadingly implied that employer claims were across all industries.

"The ACTU is implying employers are being greedy and unreasonable in these demands, but is failing to disclose the areas where employers have had to accept significant new regulations and costs" since 2009.

Mr Anderson said the government had at the time promised employees no loss in pay, and employers no huge increase in labour costs. Only the first promise was kept, he said.

Opposition workplace relations spokesman Eric Abetz said employers needed "practical solutions to practical problems" - something not being provided by current workplace laws.

Sources;

www.abc.com.au and Fairfax Media at  
www.theage.com.au and  
www.smh.com.au



# Metro culls 109 skilled jobs as MTR profits skyrockets.

Adam Carey, Clay Lucas

April 19, 2012

METRO'S operating profit leapt by almost a quarter last year, its Hong Kong-based parent company MTR has announced.

Melbourne train operator Metro sacked 51 people on Tuesday and cut 58 temporary and vacant positions in what it called a "centralisation" of staff. The job losses follow a big jump in profit for Metro. MTR's 2011 annual report shows that Metro made "a 22.7 per cent increase in operating profit to \$HK400 million (\$A49.53 million) mainly due to more project works as well as favourable currency movements".

Metro's revenue after expenses last year was \$HK8.525 billion, up from \$HK6.913 billion in 2010. Metro replaced Connex as Melbourne's metropolitan rail operator in November 2009. The sacked workers included four station masters, each of whom had worked on Melbourne's railways for between 30 and 45 years. Also let go were engineers, administration officers, technical office staff and six area managers.

The Rail, Tram and Bus Union's Victorian state secretary, Trevor Dobbyn, said it was an appalling decision by Metro. "This is a decision driven by the bottom line, not by what the public needs," Mr Dobbyn said. "They are taking out highly skilled operational staff, which makes no sense."

Metro spokeswoman Leah Waymark said the operator had recruited more than 800 people since it had replaced Connex, 700 more than planned. "We are constantly looking at our resource requirements and putting people where they are needed the most," Ms Waymark said. "The changes being made follow a full assessment and intense period of recruitment in key areas."

Read more: <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/metro-culls-skilled-jobs-as-profit-skyrockets-20120418-1x7m1.html#ixzz1sSa85Jbe>

## Letters

### My Resignation with regret.

Dear Marc,

It is with regret that I tender my resignation from the RTBU-ILD, effective 19th July 2012, at which date I will be retiring from service with the railways.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all union delegates past and present for their assistance during my time with the various companies that have attempted to undermine hard fought and won conditions for all unionists.

I would also like to thank all the Drivers and Trainees I have worked with over the years, you always made life interesting.

Sadly, I think that the coming times and political climate are going to make life more interesting than any of us ever thought it'd be.

Good luck and best wishes for the battles to come.

Regards,  
Gary Smith.

### Passing of Gerard O'Keefe

Dear Colleagues,

I wish to advise that Ballarat Driver, Gerard O'Keefe passed away after a short battle with cancer.

Gerard was a long standing colleague and friend to many members of staff within Train Crew and the Ballarat region.

He had a long career in Victoria Railways, joining the service in 1976. After completing his engineman training at South Dynon, he transferred to Ballarat in 1977.

Our thoughts are with Gerard's family and friends.

Kind regards,  
Rob Barnett

Epping, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2012.

Dear Marc.

**A thank you and adieu.**

**Reluctantly I gave notice of my intention to retire from my job as train driver with Metro, effective from the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 2012.**

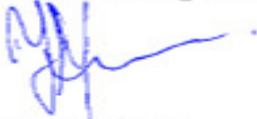
**With this in mind I would also like to resign from my membership with the RTBU from that date.**

**I wish to take this opportunity to say good bye to all my friends and mates in various parts of the railway system, made during many years on the "footplate", working for the railways, both on "Loco", as well as on the "Sparks", and of course all colleagues at Metro, Pass and Freight.**

**I would like to thank the R.T.B.U for it's assistance over the years and hope that all members maintain a united stance in maintaining the conditions fought for so many years ago.**

**I wish all the Best and Success in future endeavours.**

**Warmest Regards,**



**Hank Meijer  
Driver — Epping**

ENTERED

Thankyou and Farewell.

Let it be known, that I will be retiring from the Driving Grade on Sat 25<sup>th</sup> August 2012.

I would like to bid Farewell to all my mates that I've known during my career on the Railways — Footplate years from 16<sup>th</sup> June 1969 to 25<sup>th</sup> August 2012.

Many thanks to all the Past and Present Union officials, assistance I've had over the years. Importantly, improving conditions for both Male and Female Drivers.

I'll would like to keep in touch via "Loco Limer" magazines.

Thankyou and good luck in coming years

Yours faithfully.

Bill Perussich (Retired A-roster Driver)





**Terry Sheedy**  
State President RTBU

# Injured?

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# Cab Committee report Southern Cross:

**By Karl Costanzo**  
**Cab Committee Coordinator**

The low fuel light is steadily being rolled out across the fleet of Vlocities as they cycle through the Dandenong factory. The first thing the driver will notice, is the 'low fuel warning' tile that replaces the aux engine warning tile.

The next thing is the fuel gauge itself. It has been replaced on the 'B' side only and indicates fuel level through a row of constantly lit coloured L.E.D's. The 'A' side analogue gauge remains.

This change to electronic gauge is to pick up and transmit the low fuel signal to the drivers cab. Also, a 'range' sticker has been placed in the cabs to advise the driver how many k's to a full tank, half, quarter and low.

Of interest is the fact that the 'TM' or middle unit in a 3VL set is not fitted with this equipment. It retains the analogue gauges. So if you are running two 3 car vlocity sets, you would only get warning for four cars; the outer two and inner two. (Bombardier felt that it would be unlikely for the TM to run low first). There have been some minor teething problems that are in the process of being fixed. An example is the warning re setting itself due to fuel sloshing around in the tanks and repeatedly alerting the driver.

The Sprinters are the next to receive the mod, and 7011 is the first to be fitted with the low fuel light. Anyone who has read the circular on this would ask: what's the point? Once the low fuel light comes on at 250 litres and the driver has reported same, it won't show a reading any lower than 180 litres. Once you get to that point, I guess, it's your guess or Car's guess or....There hasn't been a whole lot of consultation with this and I think to be frank, Bombardier are struggling to even make it work. As for how reliable it is going to be, I guess we'll find out. I can't see what's wrong with trusting a Driver when he/she reports on the level of the actual fuel tank gauge as we have always done.

Vlocity #'s: 30, 40 and 50 have been selected to be the guinea pigs for any new mods taking place. This is to try and help contain the amount of units out there running with non - standard equipment.

You might have seen the illuminated V.C button on the desk (daylight mode only), variable speed control for cab A/C fan, and the windscreen demister, which has at last, been hooked up to the cab active switch. As with all mods, they are there for you to play with, we require your feedback. If you don't like let us know. If you do, let us know.....Many of these mods have occurred as a result of drivers making suggestions to the Cab Committee. So speak up. We're here to make your job safer and more comfortable.

The Vlocity units that are fitted with electric mirrors have

proven themselves durable enough and have saved enough backs and shoulders that it is time, I think for V/line to fit out the rest of the fleet. The existing ones are not holding up for service, as the arms seem to be all bent out of shape and to adjust one side is totally different to the other. This means in and out of your seat adjusting and so on until, hopefully you get it right. And how many trips per shift would you do that? Just shunting around Spenna requires a multiple series of adjusting both ends. Please book mirrors that aren't right to Cars and on the green forms to us and hopefully we might get something done about it.

Zero speed: Management have instigated a modification to the door release function on Vlocities. A software change will disable the door release buttons until the train has come to complete stop. This is due to the fact that currently, once the doors have been released, they can be opened under 4 km/h. This will change the way a driver comes into a platform and may cause the service to loose time. It has not yet been connected.

Loco's: N464 is running about with the new electric hand-brake for your comments. It and N462 have also been fitted with the new air ride seats. As a result, the first aid kit has been relocated from the second person's side floor No1 end, to the side wall under the whistle box second person's side. Also, there are issues with the instructor's seat being fouled by the new one, particularly at the No1 end. We hope to have a new, relocated seat for trial soon.

The toilets are becoming an issue of late as they now contain sanitary bins that have not been secured reliably. This and the fact that the toilets aren't maintained regularly makes the facility less than desirable to use. When N464 was released ex CCO from Newport recently, it came out smelling like roses and everything worked. This then is the minimum standard we hope to achieve and will push for improvements from there. Eg: a regular maintenance cycle at a suitable facility.

That's all for now, from the Cab Committee.

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# Signal Sighting Report

By Craig Haber

A busy time for Signal Sighting, with a some projects coming to completion, others just starting, as well as ongoing issues.

## Keon Park - South Morang

The weekend of 26-27<sup>th</sup> November 2011 saw the commissioning of the double-track from Keon Park to Epping, and the new track through to South Morang. Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> was spent focusing and adjusting all the signals from Keon Park to Epping, completed in saturating rain. Given the conditions and scale of the commissioning, it was a good effort by everyone involved to have the track ready for testing, and driver training on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup>. The signals through to South Morang were focussed and adjusted on 7<sup>th</sup> Feb, with driver training beginning soon after. One outstanding issue is the relocation of dwarf EPP169 (3 road), which somehow escaped the attention of the planners and builders, with the lead to the new 3A and 3B roads being too close to this pre-existing signal. It is to be relocated in an up direction, to a location with suitable clearance between tracks.

## Westall

This project was finally completed over the weekend of 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> January, 2012. There were plenty of problems along the way, and I dare say everyone involved was glad to see the end of it! Issues at final commissioning included adjusting signals to give best possible viewing in, under, and around the unhappy mix of old and new overhead structures (the old ones were to be removed, but this was just one of many things to change in the life of the project), and at final commissioning, we found one signal (WTL739) in the wrong location, badly affecting it's viewing range. Pleasingly, a new hole was promptly bored and the signal re-located 'while-u-wait', placing it where it was originally asked to be. The outer edge canopy lights on the platform verandahs on platforms 1 & 2 are still turned off due to sighting issues and will remain off until a fix is agreed upon.

## Dandenong

The major renewal of this location is nearly complete, with all-but-one of the 1920's model Westinghouse Style 'R' signals replaced with TC2 LED's on Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> April (no joke!), with the remaining redundant Style 'R' (DNG735) to be removed when the interlocking is updated. A couple of incandescent searchlights survived the changeover weekend (DNG719 and 729) – these will be completed at the same time. Dandenong is our first use of tilting signal masts, distinguishable by their lack of a maintenance ladder and landing. These will prevent annoying graffiti attacks, and allow signal renewal at locations where new standard width ladders and landings cannot fit between tracks.

## Lynbrook Station/Loop

The new station project gave us the opportunity to upgrade the signals to LED. This was also completed on 1<sup>st</sup> April.

## Williams Landing

Another new station requiring signal changes, and an interesting learning experience. The slewing of the east line required relocation of signals G825/G824 from the gantry, to post mounts. As the west line signals were to remain on the gantry (for now), it was agreed to use overhauled incandescent searchlights, with LED conversion to come later (when the gantry is removed, and up direction signals relocated, anticipated for October). On the day (25<sup>th</sup> March), we arrived to find the replacement searchlight units to be poor, with dull lights and hence unsatisfactory viewing. After a couple of hours of tinkering (including upping the voltage to the correct level, cleaning the lenses and internal reflectors, and getting the focus right), a good result was obtained. One wonders how many of the poor-quality searchlights elsewhere on the network are suffering these deficiencies? It's not an LED, but could (and has been) mistaken for one. An additional issue here has been the material chosen for the new building. We feared the material would give issues with sun glare, being similar to that originally installed on the new Footscray footbridge (remember the 30km/h speed restriction?), which required replacement of many panels to prevent. Research revealed the building to be on a near-identical angle to the Footscray bridge, and having viewed the selected material, it was clear that history would repeat. Subsequently, an anti-glare film is to be applied to the surface, which will hopefully prevent such a problem.

## Ongoing Maintenance

While there are a few locations on the network with upgrades in progress, there are other areas where the signals are deteriorating faster than they are being maintained. We have received a commitment to spruce up the incandescent searchlight signals in the Richmond-Burnley and East Camberwell-Box Hill areas, which are probably the worst on the network (those pictured below are at Mont Albert). Other locations on our list include Altona Jcn-Westona, and Moonee Ponds-Broadmeadows. It is unfortunate that we have to fight hard for basic maintenance such as having targets painted black.



### Foliage

Foliage is an ongoing problem across the network, and badly affects the safety of train running. Foliage is obscuring signals, whistle and curve boards, and restricting our visibility of trackside workers, and also their visibility of us. Viewing of the Richmond-Blackburn section on 29/5 revealed 36 (!) signals with viewing restricted by foliage, which is totally unacceptable. In other locations, trees are contacting passing trains (neatly trimming them to the loading gauge), or perilously close to the overhead. You can help by reporting foliage issues to Metrol - the more reports, the more pressure on Metro to get something done – if we each report just one issue a day, it soon adds up! After speed restrictions were requested at 10 of the worst affected locations, a flurry of cutting activity took place, resulting in some much needed improvement. Major foliage works have been done during the recent shut down on the Glen Waverley line (with more work to come), and works are scheduled to target the Belgrave/Lilydale corridor during weekend occupations in October.

### Armadale – how hard can it be?

The perplexing and long-running issue of the Armadale curve boards was finally fixed late April, having taken more than 4 months to get right! According to my notes, on 4/1, A '75' curve board had been incorrectly installed on the down local lines – the correct '60' was re-instated by 18/1. Fair enough – mistakes get made, and that was likely to be the end of it. But no, as by 26/1, a '60' had replaced one of the '75' boards on the down Through lines. This too was pursued, and a couple of weeks later I went on holidays. I was most surprised to return 4 weeks later, finding on 26/3 that this had been fixed, but a different '60' had become '75' on the Locals! This was rectified on 26/4, hopefully for the last time!

### Sunbury

The first spark has finally reached Sunbury, reaching our newest terminus on 5/8/12. Many signalling changes to make this corridor suitable for EMU running have been completed. Most of the mainline signals have been converted to the TC2 (LED 'Searchlight') type, and brought closer to track centre, to give uninterrupted viewing inside the overhead structures.

### Regional Rail Link (RRL)

This project will see major changes, especially on the Sydenham corridor. Alterations between Viaduct Junction and Melbourne Yard are now in place, and there will be further changes in this area, phased in over several stages. The Footscray area also is looking quite different, with most of the trees removed, as well as shops and businesses. A new crossover has been installed (and will soon be commissioned) at Albion, which will allow up trains to terminate on Platform 1 during occupations for works between here and Sunshine. More news as the project develops.

### Upcoming Projects

Works are progressing on the Greensborough-Hurstbridge ATC project, with alterations at Greensborough scheduled for commissioning late September. A major project scheduled to commence from Easter 2013 is the renewal and upgrade of the Kensington-Moonee Ponds and Flemington Racecourse lines. On the mainline, the existing multi-lens LED signals (which were a quick replacement for life expired semaphore signals about 10 years ago) on the original posts will be replaced by TC2 signals on new tilt masts, with some alterations to locations. The changes to the Racecourse line will be more significant, with the 2 position signals and all 3 signal-boxes to be abolished, and 3 position LED signals to be installed. A computer-based-interlocking will be controlled from Kensington.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **By Colin Holly**

The following is available online and gives a brief outline of the proposed RRL works. As indicated by the red line below showing the RRL lines direct access to the regional platforms over the existing flyover. This will segregate the majority of the V/Line services from the metro network. At this stage RRL lines will not have accesses to North Melbourne platforms, passengers will travel to Southern Cross for loop services. The new two track bridge over Dudley street will form part of the goods access track between the Arrival yards and Southern Cross releasing real-estate to construct the RRL lines on the current goods alignment.

### **City - Maribyrnong River**

1. Construction of a new 1 kilometre rail overpass over the Maribyrnong River area including a rail flyover between the Maribyrnong River and Hopkins Street, Footscray.
2. Major bridge modifications at Dynon Road, Moonee Ponds Creek and Lloyd Street.
3. A new twin track rail bridge over Dudley Street in West Melbourne.

4. Extensive track reconfiguration and upgrades to the North Melbourne rail-over-rail flyover which will be used to access platforms 1-8 at Southern Cross Station.
5. Laying of new track over 4.5 kilometres to separate metropolitan and regional trains.
6. Localised replacement and upgrading of some components of the signalling system from City - Maribyrnong River (*not illustrated*).

### Footscray - Deer Park

1. Laying 7.5 kilometres of new track from Footscray to Sunshine.
2. Station at West Footscray will be rebuilt.
3. Upgrades to Footscray station including new platforms adjacent to Irving Street, improved station entrance and forecourts.
4. A major upgrade to Sunshine station including a new platform and pedestrian overpass, improved station entrance and forecourts.
5. Improvements to the entrance, forecourt and an additional 100 car parking spaces at Tottenham station.
6. Removal of two level crossings at Anderson Road (Sunshine).
7. Improvement works to level crossings at Fitzgerald Road (Ardeer), Mt Derrimut Road and Robinsons Road (Deer Park).
8. Modifications to the metropolitan signalling system from Footscray to Sunshine (*not illustrated*).

### Deer Park - West Werribee Junction

1. Approximately 25 kilometres of new track from Deer Park to West Werribee junction.
2. Two new stations at Wyndham Vale and Tarneit.
3. A full depth cutting (2km) through Wyndham Vale.
4. No new level crossings with 12 road over rail bridges.

### West Werribee Junction

1. Two new dedicated regional tracks over 2.5 kilometres connecting the existing Geelong line to Regional Rail Link.
2. A new rail bridge over the existing broad gauge and standard gauge tracks and Bulban Road.
3. Slewing of the existing broad gauge (V/Line) tracks.
4. Realignment of Bulban Road to accommodate the new rail bridge.
5. Service and fibre optic cable relocations, as well as drainage and landscaping works.
6. Signalling civil works (*not illustrated*).

### Rail Systems

1. Modification to existing train control systems, the creation of a new train control system and a new generation computer based signalling system for the Regional Rail Link tracks (*spanning the entire RRL corridor*).
2. Installation of approximately 36 kilometres of fibre optic cable to support the new train control systems (*spanning the entire RRL corridor*).
3. Passenger information systems at new and substantially modified stations including:
  - Footscray
  - West Footscray
  - Sunshine
  - Tarneit
  - Wyndham Vale



Signals Passed At Danger is on the rise, some can be contributed to known issues with infrastructure and others are just plain old sloppy housekeeping in the cab. One of the most common is starting against the signal on a platform. At the start of a run on a quick changeover, assisting a less able person on your train or just someone asking for information can easily take your attention away from the primary task. Don't rush, take your time, and use the reverser as a memory aid. Only throw the reverser when an aspect is displayed and centre it when not. It may sound so simple it's not worth doing, but you'll be surprised the amount of drivers this could have saved. One of the first things my regular mate told me at 17 years old when having my first go on the yard pilot. Remember boy, the shunters may wave, but before you throw that reverser and take brake off, is there a signal and do you have it? I know it small, although it has saved me on occasion.

Sometimes I get asked why signals change from bottom yellow to top yellow for no reason. This is due to the overlap at the next signal, as the train in front moves past the next signal by around 100m a medium speed can be displayed and when the train passes the following signal and a full line speed overlap is provided, the medium speed clears to a normal speed. That is why we see two signal protection when running on top lights and one signal protection on bottom lights. Sometimes a medium speed warning is displayed when there is not enough braking distance between the signals to show a normal speed warning. The calculations are based track speed and

braking rates for all vehicles, taking into account gradients and permanent restrictions as in speed curves. The days of having to put the brake on and then take it off if the signal is at proceed are just about over, all the signal spacing and aspects means under normal conditions applying the brake at the yellow, the train will be able to stop prior to the red. The signal headways or amount traffic possible over the corridor is based on clear or green aspects. That is the second train traveling in the same direction will not pass a warning aspect for the nominated track capacity. When we follow on warning aspects we start to exceed the nominated trains per hour that the signalling was designed for. The warning tells us not to rush as there is a red signal ahead. That is why it is important to respect the aspects, by doing the aspect speed it protects us from collision should we misjudge the red signal as an overlap is provided based on the previous aspect. The biggest disappointment is the use of the signals to control level crossing times, that is providing the driver with a warning aspect not because the line is obstructed but reducing closure times at level crossings. When the system is full of yellow aspects it becomes harder to take seriously that you must stop at the next signal, as we see countless times the signal clears to proceed as the train approaches. As we know with a green aspect when we switch off a little after subconsciously acknowledging, we must be vigilant not to fall in the same trap on repeated yellow aspects throughout the network.

Collin Holly

## Scholarships

Scholarships are available for children of financial members of the Locomotive Division. Applications can only be made online at the following address:

<https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/scholarships/>

**Students will need their 'end of year' results to apply for a scholarship.**

Students may apply for more than one scholarship.

Students must provide all the information that is requested of them in the application form and click on the 'Submit' button to lodge an application. Failure to do so will result in the application being invalid.

Please check the closing date for applications on the application form of the scholarship you wish to apply for as NO late applications are accepted.

### The Frank Carey Memorial Scholarship

Two scholarships valued at \$700 will be awarded after consideration of the student's school involvement and end of year results together with the student's involvement in a community group (such as sporting, church, hobby or charity). One student must be currently completing **Year 10** and one must be currently completing **Year 7** in 2011 and be sons or daughters of financial members of the Public Transport Union Victorian Locomotive Division. Each scholarship is for two years and carries an allowance of \$350 per year.

### The Steve Gibson Memorial Scholarship

Two scholarships valued at \$600 will be awarded after consideration of the student's school involvement and end of year results together with the student's involvement in a community group (such as sporting, church, hobby or charity). Students must be currently completing **Year 10** in 2011 and be sons or daughters of financial members of the Public Transport Union Victorian Locomotive Division. Each scholarship is for two years and carries an allowance of \$300 per year.

# Talkback from Hinch

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

## Cancer and enginemen...What's goin' on?

As a group, we grieve for and collectively lament the loss of comrades such as Rick Kaleta and recently Gerard O'keefe. Two wonderful enginemen taken from us by the scourge that is cancer. They are but two in an ever growing roll call of Loco people thus affected. I am not furnished with statistical fact when it comes to an average of people per head of population struck with this illness, but I am willing to go out on a limb and say that our group seems to be over represented. There are indeed also many, many retired blokes suffering this fate as I write this. I know that retired driver and former union official Warren Winton won't mind me relating his opinion that the finger test only makes your eyes water if the doctor hasn't cut his fingernails. Yes Warren has recently defeated cancer. Amongst our ranks there are so many who are recovering or undergoing treatment to try and beat it.

Common denominator, diesel fumes – smoke and massive electromagnetic fields. An article in the age, Thursday June 14 2012 announced that there is now officially a scientifically supported link between diesel and cancer. This article reports that the world health organization no less, has declared that diesel smoke causes cancer. The international agency for research on cancer, which had previously classified diesel fumes as “probably carcinogenic” has reclassified its position to say that diesel “is carcinogenic” and puts it into the same category as asbestos and ultra violet radiation. Apparently the main studies that led to this conclusion were based on a review of highly exposed workers and the incidence of cancer. Alarm bells are ringing people... For those of you who are of a certain vintage and drove blue Harris sparks, you will have a letter assuring you that because these trains were chock a block full of asbestos and you should contract asbestosis, Victorian Railways and its heirs and successors will admit liability. I think that in light of this new evidence regarding the detrimental effects of diesel fumes, the collective gaggle of railway management groups should be investing in any means necessary to ensure our health and wellbeing. This is a basic duty of care deal and I would suggest that it would have the powers that be, just a little worried. Please, voice your opinion and write to you OH&S reps expressing your concern.

## Support, support...what support?

About twelve months ago I approached V/Line management about the possible reintroduction of a program that has been around for a decade or two, known as Peer Group support. (PGS) Basically this program

involves the training of a number of volunteers who have experienced the horror of a rail fatality in the art of .....listening. Essentially a PGS volunteer would make him – herself available to be at the beck and call of any member who endures a fatality and needs some one to just plain old talk to. The role of the PGS volunteer is to simply do that and NO more. He is not there to provide psychological assistance, but simply be a shoulder to lean on at three in the morning when the walls are closing in and the nightmares are visiting.

Management loved the idea and promised me frankincense and Myrrh and all the gold that I could eat (apologies to Monty Python) and promptly hand balled the project to HR. Yes, those marvelous people. Any how the whole thing got off to a useless start when the HR person decided to derail it by bringing in a certain supervisor to voice his opinion and he promptly drove a meat cleaver right down the guts of the whole concept. I was discouraged but decided to pursue the concept when the HR person offered to, as a group, look at the existing models out there. I was highly suspicious because I sensed very strongly that HR were only intending to pay lip service to this program and like everything else, they have to have total control. Good heavens, we can't have those driver bastards running this!

I was not to be disappointed and my suspicions were confirmed. After some months of complete inactivity I was informed that HR had selected the appropriate model without consultation and that was that. Cut to the recent past. Many of you who read The Age will be familiar with a series of articles in recent times exposing the effects and trauma suffered by train drivers when they experience a fatality. With the momentum of public awareness at avalanche velocity I once again contacted senior management to say that the time was now right to start talking again about PGS. “oh don't worry” came the reply. “Everyone has been trained up and we are ready to start the program.” So I asked just who had been trained, “Why, your supervisors of course.” Came the response. Let's get this straight, as it was before, the bloke who would call you to ask what happened was the supervisor. So what has changed, zip, zilch, zero. Not a sausage..... This is NOT PGS, this is management indulgence. Supervisors are not our peers. They are management's representatives whether they like it or not. PGS volunteers are just that, volunteers and not someone who is doing it as a part of their job description. In other words the whole thing is a fake cooked up by HR to show the whole world that they have done SOMETHING. I am disgusted because PGS works well worldwide and this is the only known program run exclusively by management and supervisory staff. You blokes decide for yourselves.

## Still in the pipeline

To all those of you who expressed an interest in purchasing a book of artwork by the late, great Ricky Kaleta, I ask for your continued patience. Dave Kaleta

and I have been working on this but we have struck a number of snags, not the least of which has been funding. It may eventuate that we have to ask you all to pledge a deposit, collect those funds and provide an assurance of the finance. Do not worry, I still have all your names and will welcome any new ones. 0427872752

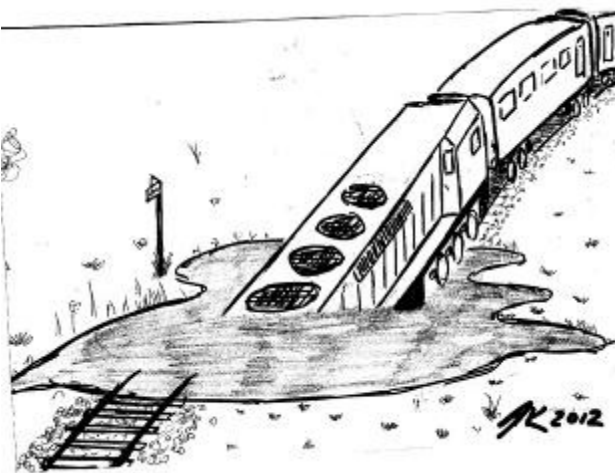
### **Farewell to an old friend...**

The railway world is in mourning for the loss of possibly the most iconic establishment in Victorian rail folklore. The Big House. Yes sadly it has become a victim of progress and has closed its doors as a pub and will be redeveloped as apartments and the like with an up market restaurant and possibly a trendy bar. In the last couple of days of its existence many of us gathered to celebrate its history (wow, the power of the internet and facebook) as word got out and I am happy to report that enginemens past and present, rail men both Rolling Stock and Traffic Branch turned out in numbers to farewell the old girl. I took a bucket load of photos that day so any of you who would like a cd, give me a call or email me 0427872752 or [talkback@dodo.com.au](mailto:talkback@dodo.com.au) and I will burn you a copy. In return, you can pledge a small donation to the Peter Mac cancer clinic.

### **Holy Mud Batman**

Ahh the great Standard Gauge. You will all be pleased to know that ARTC recently did an enormous volume of work on our great North East corridor to right the wrongs of their misguided attempt at the redevelopment of the busiest piece of rail on the Eastern seaboard. They had a ten day shut down on the west track, they employed a cast

of thousands, they brought in rail resources from all over the country and violas, the section of track between Seymour loop and a point about three kilometers short of Avenal has been rejuvenated into a bloody sensational bit of track work.....now all they have to do is rebuild the other three hundred kilometers. Let me tell you that the East track is deteriorating rapidly. We have these brand new, you beauty seats in the standard gauge N class locos (and I have to tell you, these seats really are the ducks guts. They cost V/line a bomb to install.) and even these seats bottom out regularly on any one trip. I wonder how a few of the Wodonga men who have a, shall we say, substantial girth are faring with their back problems. Oops, apologies to Scooby and the Hillbilly.....



Michael A. Hinch

## **Off The Rails**

Provided by Damian O'Malley



A committee meeting was held on the 14th of April to discuss the wash-up from the O.T.R. Poker Run and after party, the general consensus was that although the bike run and after party went well, some fine tuning was required. This will always be the case as we try to improve the run and party each year, also we are looking into more protection from inclement weather for the party goers.

Currently a number of Driver's are going through illnesses

or injuries and sadly we lost Gerard O'Keefe, former Bal-larat Branch Secretary to that insidious disease cancer in May, the O.T.R. is in the process of catching up with these members and their families to assist them however we can on behalf of all of us.

On a brighter note, we have also been able to secure a couple more sponsors this year and we thank Metro and V/line for this support. We also have our website up and running, all members are invited to join and keep up with all the "Goss", view photos and videos of past Poker Runs as well as join in on forums. You can check out the site on <http://otrvic-com.webs.com/>

We will also be running a mini raffle midyear, this is due to the number of members in need of assistance which is growing year by year, please support the guys selling these tickets as one day, you may be the poor bugger in need.

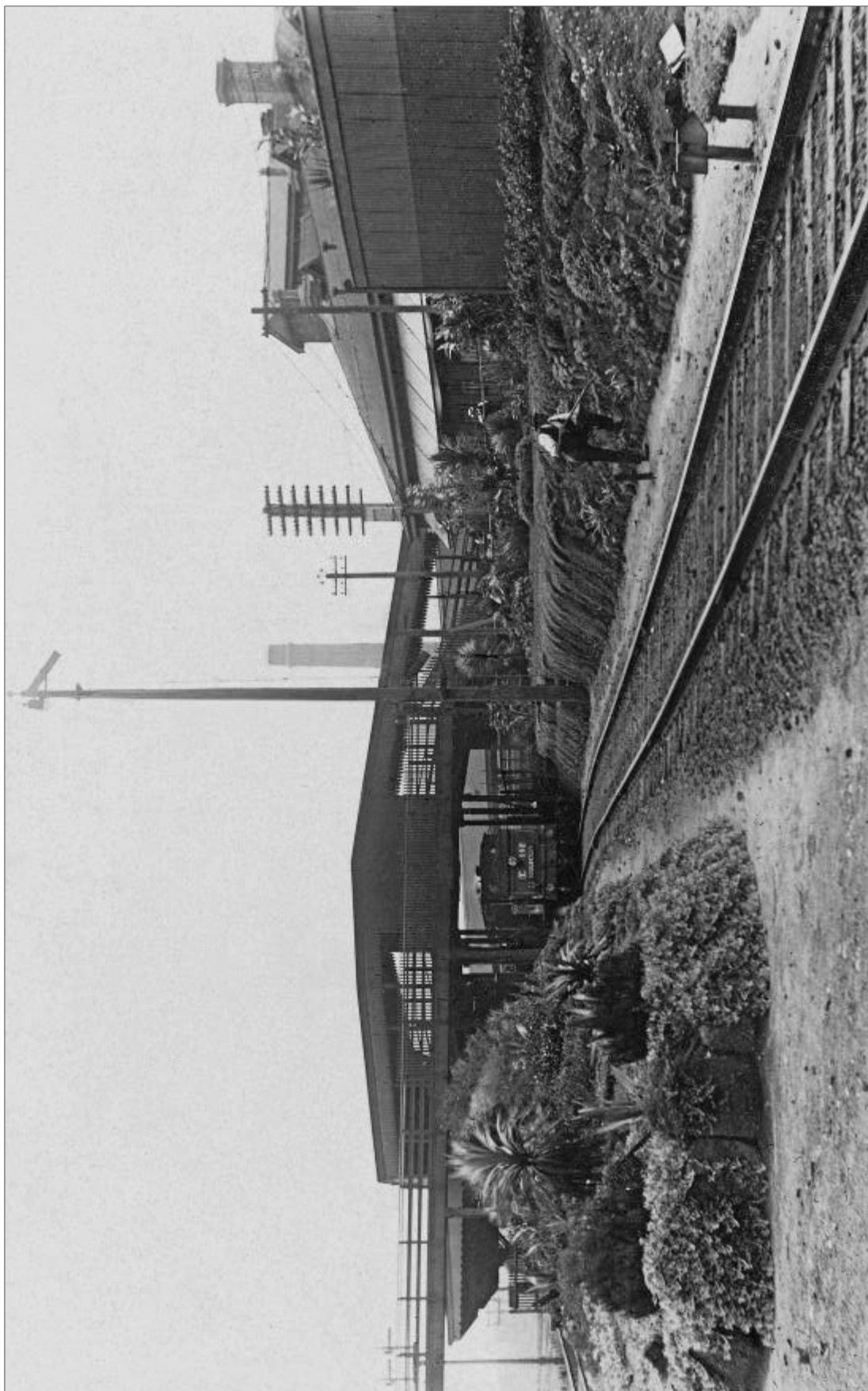
The committee and members of the O.T.R. would especially like to thank the Divisional officers for their support and allowing us to publish our article in Loco Lines for all Drivers' to keep abreast of what is happening with our fellow comrades.

Cheers Shakey



## Where Is It ...?

with Trevor Penn  
Passenger Sub-division, Southern Cross



THE previous *Where Is It ...?* [below right] was at Wangaratta, in the former narrow gauge yard. The photograph was taken by Wal Larsen.

The winners were Tony Petersen (Metropolitan, Flinders Street) and Matt Cattle (PacNat, Sth Dynon). Congratulations to them. 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!

### Wangaratta

IT'S Tuesday morning, 6<sup>th</sup> October 1953, and little engine 13A festooned with vegetation and toilet paper streamers waits at the head of the Moyhu Goods [pictured right]. Fireman Donald Johns, standing behind the Train Examiner, has shovelled on a round of coal and opened the blower valve to raise boiler pressure for the 7.00 am departure of the last steam train down the King River Valley.

### The Whitfield Line

The Victorian Railways operated four isolated two-foot six-inch [760 mm] gauge lines (five if you include the short, horsedrawn affair at Port Welshpool). This 30½ mile [49 km] branch ran south from Wangaratta to Whitfield and was the first to open, in March 1899.



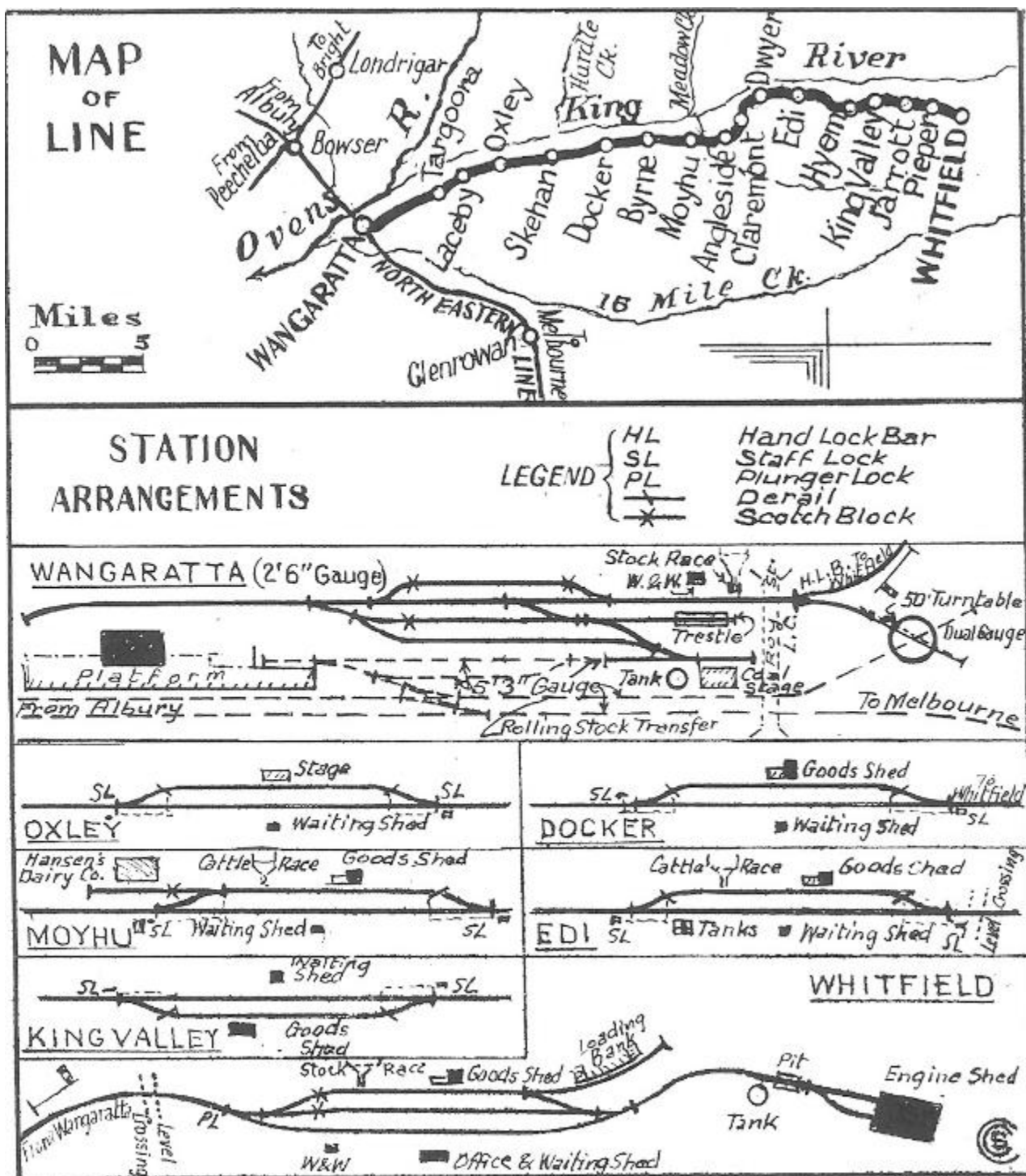
The slim gauge with its low construction costs was a child of the 1890s Depression, but operating expenses were high as small locos hauled small loads, and transhipping at break of gauge locations was



Driver Allwyn "Ocker" Creelman (left) and his Fireman, Don Johns, pose beside their steed before departure from Wangaratta for cameraman Wal Larsen, down from his home in Bright for the occasion. It appears the Train Examiner, being a bit of a larrikin, has placed a bogus Red Card "NOT TO GO" behind the number plate!

Forty-three year old "Ocker" joined the Railway Service in the desperate year of 1933 (who did he know?), became an Engine Cleaner in 1937 and obtained his Driver's Certificate on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1946. The 1950 Seniority List shows him at Dimboola but he was obviously at Wangaratta in 1953. At Woodend in 1960, by 1967 he had the coveted (Day Shift!) job at Bacchus Marsh, running the "Coalie", from whence he eventually retired.

Don as a Driver worked at various locations including Hamilton, Sale and Orbost. 6.10.1953.



labour intensive and time consuming. This was especially so at Wangaratta where everything was done the hard way, without the benefit of cranes or other aids.

Given the even nature of the terrain in the Valley, the line could have been built to the usual five-foot three-inch [1,600 mm] "Irish" gauge for little extra cost, but there were pipe dreams of an extension over the mountains to Tolmie and the Mansfield district where a Narrow gauge line, with its sharp curves and smaller earthworks, would have been much cheaper to build.

Trains were initially run from the Whitfield end, at which terminal was the branch's only engine shed – a two road structure with room for four Narrow gauge A class tank locomotives, though two engines (one spare) provided motive power for the daily-except-Sunday Mixed trains. No doubt that large shed which is still standing (but only just), was built in anticipation of the extension that never came to fruition.

Whitfield must have been a nice little job as the Seniority List for January 1907 shows the incumbent being G. J. Harris; a scab or "blackleg" hired, along



with a swag of others, during the Enginemen's strike in May 1903, and fast tracked to pass (could a blackleg possibly fail?) his Driver's Examination by 17<sup>th</sup> September. Four months!!! What a wealth of experience he must have acquired in that time ...

The Whitfield line died slowly. The Mixed trains were cut back to four days per week by 1916 and nuked altogether in October 1930 as a collateral effect of the Great Depression. The weekly Goods train, now running from the "Wang" end and conveying any passengers offering, departed at the inviting hour of 3.00 am Tuesdays and occupied a leisurely four hours running time each way.

On other days the Postal Motor, a four-wheel "Casey Jones" track speeder (semi-enclosed and towing a small trailer) introduced in February 1937, conveyed His Majesty's Mail and could accommodate several customers, parcels and very light goods. This vehicle, numbered NK1, was initially nicknamed "Chinese Express" but subsequently became known as "Spirit of Salts" following the introduction of the Broad gauge *Spirit of Progress* in November 1937.

NK1 found its way to the Puffing Billy operation at Belgrave in May 1961 but was destroyed in a regrettable incident involving locomotive 6A, a curious system of wooden "Trolley Staffs" and some volunteer operators near Selby in January 1970.

The economic and political climate of the post war years was hostile to cute little branch lines, and bushfire damage in February 1952 saw the Goods service (but not the Postal Motor) truncated to Moyhu, 14½ miles [23 km] out. Departure time was a far more civilised 7.00 am, returning to Wangaratta around 12 noon.

Vultures, in the guise of the Joint Transport Research Committee rubber stamped the Railway Commissioners' recommendation to close the line. The very last service was "Spirit of Salts" through to Whitfield on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October 1953.



**On an earlier occasion we see cheerful "Ocker" at Moyhu beside narrow gauge tank locomotive 15A. Ocker's attire is so typical of past generations of VR Enginemen. Both 13A and 15A were withdrawn from service following the Whitfield line's closure and scrapped at Newport Workshops in the 1950s. December 1951. PHOTO BY WAL LARSEN**

The track remained in place until 1957, while the Narrow gauge yard at Wangaratta was obliterated by the construction of the "concrete cutting" for the new Standard gauge line a few years later.

*Information from Speed Limit 20 by E. A. Downs, 1963.*

*With thanks to Steve Malpass, Nick Anchen, Eddie Cole, Graeme Lord and Tony Petersen. (TWP) LL*

# VICTORIAN RAILWAYS.

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## NOTICE TO ALL GATEKEEPERS.

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SO many accidents have recently occurred to gates on the various lines of railway that the Commissioner has issued general directions to the effect that, whenever it is proved by any person's evidence that a gate has been left across the line, unless when immediately required for passing traffic, or such gate be specially exempted, no matter whether an accident happen or not, the Gatekeeper will be forthwith dismissed without right of appeal.

2. With regard to gates specially exempted, if careful attention be not paid to have them opened for Trains when due, whether ordinary or special, the Gatekeeper will, on like evidence, be at once discharged.

Every Employé in the Department is required to report any transgression of this rule.

(By Order)

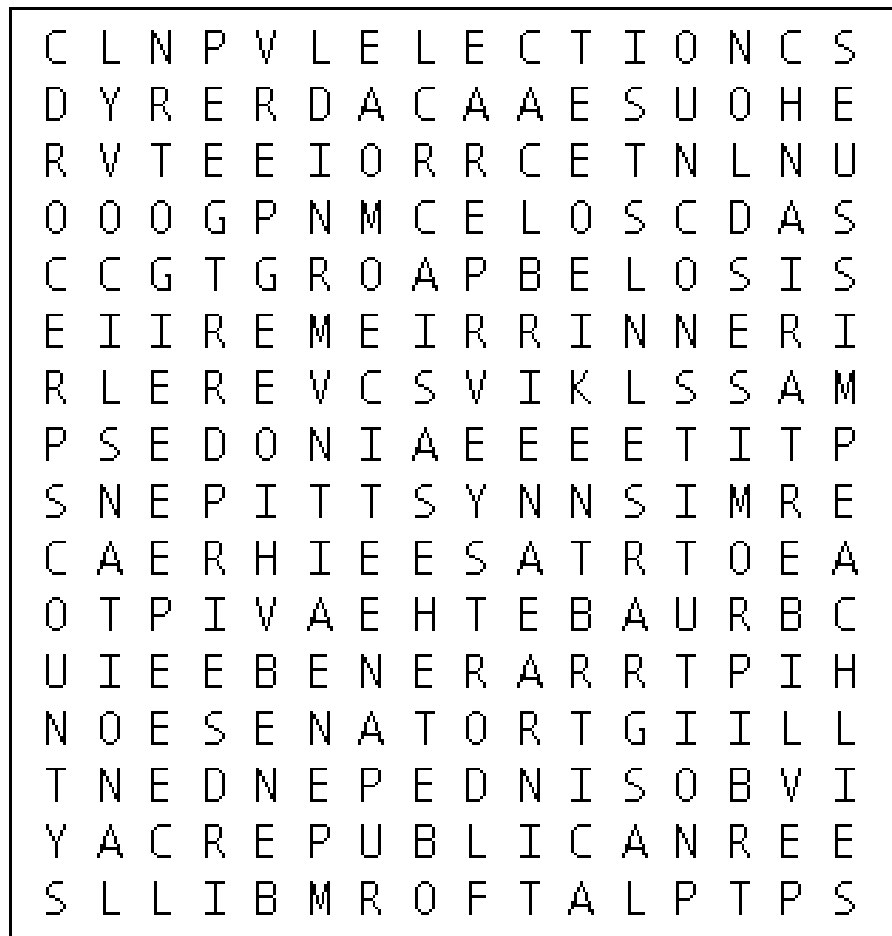
P. P. LABERTOUCHE,

*Acting Secretary.*

Railway Department,  
Melbourne, 1st February 1878.

By Authority: JOHN FERRIS, Government Printer, Melbourne.

## Politics



BILLS	ELEPHANT	LOCAL	REPRESENTATIVE
BRIBE	HOUSE	NATIONAL	REPUBLICAN
CONGRESS	IMPEACH	PLATFORM	RHETORIC
CONSERVATIVE	INDEPENDENT	PRIMARIES	RIGGED
CONSTITUTION	ISSUES	PRINCIPLES	SENATE
COUNTY	LIBERAL	PROGRESSIVE	SENATOR
DEMOCRAT	LIBERTARIAN	PROMISES	STATE
DONKEY	LIES	RECORD	VETO
ELECTION			VOTE

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<b>\$17.60</b>	Fortnightly for	<b>\$250</b>	Weekly	<b>BENEFIT</b>
<b>\$23.62</b>	Fortnightly for	<b>\$300</b>	Weekly	<b>BENEFIT</b>

- ❖ **PLUS:** \$10,000 ACCIDENTAL DEATH BENEFIT, AT NO EXTRA COST (AUTOMATICALLY INCLUDES YOUR SPOUSE)
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- ❖ STRESS AND ANXIETY RELATED CONDITIONS (THIS ONLY APPLIES TO TRAIN DRIVERS)  
AUTOMATICALLY COVERED, IF THE CONDITION IS A RESULT OF AN ACCIDENT (FATALITY OR NEAR FATALITY)  
WHILST THE DRIVER IS DRIVING A TRAIN ❖ 7 DAYS WAITING PERIOD ❖ 26 WEEKS BENEFIT PERIOD
- ❖ PAID IN ADDITION TO SICK LEAVE AND WORKERS COMPENSATION (UP TO 100% GROSS EARNINGS)
- ❖ PREMIUMS TAX DEDUCTIBLE ❖ PREMIUMS DO NOT INCREASE WITH AGE
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PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY:

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  
(STRIKE THROUGH NOT APPLICABLE) Ref:UM:1/2012




# 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	\$45.00 each
	Bomber Jackets (Dark Blue with Leather look sleeves) Color logo <b>By special order</b>	\$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 Miss (Cross out which is not applicable)

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

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

Home Ph. No:..... Mobile:.....

Email:..... Date of Birth:...../...../.....

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

Date Commenced:..... Grade: Trainee or Qualified.

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.

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