



LOCO LINES

Newsletter for Locomotive Enginemen of the Rail, Tram & Bus Union - Victoria
EDITION 60 APRIL 2014

The RTL nearly brings on an industrial dispute
STORY INSIDE: PAGE 10



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LOCO LINES

EDITION 60 APRIL 2014

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Publisher
Marc Marotta

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SECRETARY'S REPORT

By Marc Marotta
Divisional Secretary



Our union is the oldest rail union in the world, established in 1861. We have a long and proud 153-year-old history.

The one constant in the workplace is change—and our membership is changing in make up. Although the first female Loco drivers started to come through in the eighties, the numbers were always low. This started to change about six years ago. Currently the female membership of the Locomotive Division statewide is 160 and growing.

Below are the first female delegates in the Locomotive Division's history. Two are from the Metro metropolitan trains system, and one is from V/Line Passenger Service. It's important to mark a new chapter in the history of the Locomotive Division.

Ms Danielle Walker started her career in V/Line Passenger in 2005, as a conductor. She worked in that position until 2009, then was successful in her application for a position as a Trainee Locomotive Driver and qualified in 2011. She currently holds a position at Southern Cross depot.

Ms Kalli Day started working the railways in 1987 as a Station Assistant and worked in the underground loop stations, then transferred to the Upfield Line. She qualified as a Signaller in 1991 and operated the then-prevailing safe working system "train staff and ticket." Kalli applied for a Trainee Driver's Position in

2002 and qualified as a Metro Train Driver in 2004. She currently holds a driving position at Craigieburn depot.

Ms Sharon Brown started her career in what was known as The Met in 1990, in the tramway as a conductor, and worked as a conductor for twelve months. She then progressed to a Trainee Tram Driver position, qualified, and stayed in that position until 2000. Sharon applied for a position as a metropolitan train driver with M Train and qualified in November of 2001. She currently holds a position at Watergardens depot.

In 2013, they all became Locomotive Division union representatives. They've all expressed similar views about the lack of response from their employers, Metro and V/Line. Issues that these organisations both have in common include the lack of female amenities and the lack of fit-for-purpose uniforms.

On 27 March 2014, the three new union representatives all attended the RTBU Women in Public Transport Conference and one of the guest speakers was Mr Andrew Lezala. During question time, members were given an opportunity to raise concerns with the CEO of Metro Trains.

Lezala was confronted with some home truths about the lack of planning to accommodate for increased female intake into the driving grade. His responses were variously described as "political responses" or "bulls**t."

Lezala said a lot, but didn't actually answer any questions. Other matters put to him were the disgusting state of the metropolitan trains and general lack of maintenance on trains.

I advised the new reps to get used to this sort of deflection, and failure to address issues in an honest, genuine manner. Union representation is not about brilliance, but about perseverance and stamina.



Danielle Walker

Kalli Day

Sharon Brown

Safety Management – Metro Style

Members of the Locomotive Division will be aware of the Division's ongoing VCAT legal action challenging WorkSafe's unsound and supine decision in dealing with safety matters identified by Metro Health Safety Representatives.

These representatives issued a number of provisional improvement notices to Metro, which the myopic company states are acceptable faults on trains and that these trains ought to remain in service for varying periods

of time (these faults include no headlights in the period of darkness and cracked windscreens).

Needless to say, the Locomotive Division is vehemently against the so-called Metro "new safety standards," and this matter is proceeding to a further hearing on 11 May 2014 in VCAT. The Loco Division has been accused of exaggerating this situation – perhaps a recent example will reveal what Metro regard as safe.

This is recent example (19 March 2014) of what is acceptable damage to windscreens at Metro:



Defective windscreen driver. It's a serious fault. Keep on going.

Entry in the so-called Metro management system, which was endorsed by WorkSafe.

Fault Details (Read Only)	
Fault ID	1210674
Date Received	19/03/14 1840
Original Details	5036 1900 UFD A
TD Number	
Train Details	
Required Dock Time	19/03/14 1919
Preferred Shunt Location	
Car Number	495
Car Type	Comeng South
Unit Number	212
Equipment Name	Windscreen Cracked
Fault Details	Windscreen, Windscreen B Side (Drivers). Cracked. Wiper sweep affected but viewable. Lead/Trail Motor
Fault Category	S
Highlight	NONE
TA Intervention Comments	
Rectified Time	
Rectified Description	
Repair Comment/Temporary Action	
Original Details	5036 1900 UFD A
Shunt Location	NMS Nth.Melb.Stab Sdgs
Shunt Time	19/03/14 1919
Car/Unit Details	
Fault History	
Vandalism Comments	ROCKS THROWN AT TRAIN BETWEEN MORELAND AND COBURG

FMP Faults – Telephone 11100

Rail Safety

In March this year this office became aware of an activity in shunting that was so irresponsible and dangerous that it beggared belief. When it was first reported I refused to believe it, until I saw the photographic evidence.

Espee Railroad Services, owned by Railway Historical Society (A.C.T. Division) was moving locomotives to Seymour Railway Heritage for refurbishment—Y classes and T class. This episode is subject to investigation from V/Line, the track access provider, and the regulator in Victoria.

The detail of who was responsible for moving the locomotive on the turntable at Seymour is not yet established. The crew that drove the Espee Railroad advised that the R.H.S (A.C.T Division) had an access agreement with V/Line to operate in this location. V/Line has not verified this claim, and the existence of an access agreement is in doubt.

The outcome of the activities between Seymour Heritage personnel and the Espee personnel was that the locomotive and fuel oil tanker were deliberately derailed on the turntable at Seymour. See right.

The tanker was pushed onto a rail and placed on its side. Our members have to work around the unsafe and dangerous activities and of organisations that have a

Y Class shunted onto concrete



disregard for safety. At this stage we don't know if the perpetrators have any safe working or loco driver qualifications. Perhaps they have their own safety system of management—something akin to Metro's safety system...

In any case, we have been advised by the responsible authorities that the activities of Seymour Heritage and Espee will be curtailed until the facts have been established.



Oil Tanker

Negotiations Stall between Loco Div and P.N. Bulk

There are a number of contributing factors that have led to this situation. The announcement of the restructure of Pacific National Bulk, Coal and Intermodal divisions has created uncertainty lethargy in decision making from management. That, coupled with "Paramatta Rostering's" obsession with applying blank rostering in Victoria, has led to this situation.

The Locomotive Division's position has been to not accept blank line rostering— such as AM-PM grains for the depots affected (Dimboola and Maryborough), our approach was that members that were undertaking these duties would be rewarded. For example, via an allowance for when they are actually carrying out this form of working. Other initiatives that were discussed included flying crew, and available days that would also attract additional payment when members were doing it.

The Locomotive Division's claim was for these efficiencies was 4% per annum and additional payment when rostered on AM-PM grain trains, available days, or flying crew. Pacific National Bulk offered 2.5 % increase to all members and for Maryborough and Dimboola depots: an additional 0.5% for the AM-PM grain trains

This was rejected by the Locomotive Division and we advised that if P.N. Bulk wished to avoid the Locomotive Division lodging an application for protected industrial action, they should consider offering 2.5% per annum over three years with no trade-offs and renew the current agreement.

At the time of writing, P.N. Bulk has indicated that it is prepared to offer 2.5% per year over three year agreements and renew the agreement without change to rostering (which is 7.5% over the life of the agreement). I believe that P.N.'s real agenda is to get members to accept the NSW form of blank line rostering.

A clause that was omitted from the last E.A. will be added to this one, which gives a driver the capacity to ask not to have their roster changed and also clarification of the Loco Driver Classification. Other than that there will be no changes.

Rail Pro E.A. nears completion

At the time of writing, the previous non-union agreement is being replaced by a union agreement which will provide for significant improvements.

This agreement will be for a four year term, with wage increases of 4% on certification, back paid to 30 June 2013.

- 4% increase from 30 July 2014
- 4% increase from 30 July 2015
- 4% increase from 30 July 2016
- 4% increase from 30 July 2017

The net affect is that in the first year there is a total of 8% increments that will compound yearly. When this

agreement is in its second it will reach parity with some Victorian operators and will eventually overtake them. After this occurs, I believe there will be a shift to S.C.T.

The company is set to grow and it wishes to attract staff. There are also improvements in rostering and conditions; better lift-up and lay-back provisions, intervals between shifts, casual staff can be full-time after three months, and provisions to have work free weekends.

The first meeting for voting on the E.A. will be in Adelaide, and then in Victoria.

MATERNITY LEAVE

Congratulations to our Office Manager Suzi Ignatidis and her husband Paul on the birth of their first child, a baby girl named Aria.



While Suzi is on leave, the Locomotive Division has been lucky enough to obtain the services of Magda Wozniak who has done some relieving in the Divisional Office over the past 12 months.

PRESIDENT'S PARAGRAPHS

By Terry Sheedy
Divisional President



Lies, Lies and More Lies

If there is one thing I cannot stand it is people who tell blatant lies. They treat you as a fool and are convinced by their own lies. A report in the Herald Sun on 19 March under the heading "Pollies Such Good Liars," states that a recent study has found politicians make good liars because they convince themselves they are telling the truth.

And this has also made it easier to hoodwink the public because the best liars are the ones who do not realise they are lying, said the study. The study went on to suggest it may be that those who go on to become the most successful politicians are those who have developed the ability to deceive themselves into believing their own lies.

Then you have the fulltime professional liars who are spokespeople for a company or a politician. They sometimes call it "spin," but it doesn't matter how you label it: it is still blatant lying and they get away with it everyday. If this was done in a court of law it would be contempt. Yet if it is done in parliament (which is quite often) it is only classed as a lie if you mislead the parliament itself—not us suckers who pay their wages.

Let's take a look at Mr Andrew Lezala, CEO of Metro Trains. When making a presentation to AusRail in 2013, Mr Lezala was quoted saying:

"On industrial relations, when Metro took over the business in late 2009, the tail was wagging the dog. The unions came into my office and said 'as long as you remember we are here to waste your time and cost you money, we will get along fine.' So we have been to FairWork Australia 26 times, had 25 wins and one draw. So 'use the law' is the answer to this. Use it properly, prepare right—it can work. It's fair."

What a load of hogwash and blatant lies. Mr Lezala must think we are new kids on the block and came down in the last shower. The RTBU have searched and queried all unions and officials in regards to the statement allegedly made in his office and we believe he is having flashbacks to the old country.

And, as far as the wins, losses and draws go—this is definitely not the case so far as the Locomotive Division is concerned, and there are records kept by FairWork Australia.

So, tell him he's dreaming.

Bullying in the Workplace

A small article on page 3 of the Herald Sun on Thursday 24 April, with the heading "Bosses Top Bullying List" will become a major article in the near future as company managers and human resources parasites continue to bully and harass employees in the workplace.

A snapshot of the Fair Work Commission's first anti-bullying report states that "Bosses in big business are bullying staff." You only have to look, listen and read around the workplace to see that bullying is rearing its ugly head everywhere.

Just one example: Metro's direction that any employee injured at work was firstly to attend assessment. This came through without any consultation with the union (as usual): just as another circular directing members as to what they have to do, as Metro believe that they can write their own Policy and Practices Manual on the run.

Then there is the latest harassment, with members on WorkCover being interviewed by the C.E.O Andrew Lazala. Who does he think he is—a fully qualified medical doctor?

Union Rule Changes

Specific rule changes to the Victorian Branch have been endorsed by the National Council of the RTBU via a telephone hook-up, and now we have to wait for the alterations to be ticked off by the FairWork Commission.

The rule alterations cover:

- Continuing changes to rail companies' trading names
- The deletion of seven committee members required at depots despite the size and number of members (to be replaced by a Job Delegate who will deal with local issues in consultation with the Divisional Office)
- And the updating of representation on the Divisional Committee relative to the increase in membership numbers in the Metropolitan Sub-Divisional Committee and the Passenger Sub-Divisional Committee (Metropolitan will increase by two to four and Passenger by one to two).

The other important rule change is for the sale of union assets to be endorsed by at least 75% of the membership—plus other safeguards to tighten up assets paid for by the membership.

I have been advised by the National Office that the union could be battling to get approval from the FairWork Commission by November Union Elections—which would mean that we would have to wait another four years for rule changes. The wheel turns slowly.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY REPORT

By Jim Chrysostomou
Divisional Assist-Secretary



VCAT Update – Defective Headlights / Smashed Windscreens

VCAT Proceedings are continuing with a further hearing scheduled for Friday 9 May 2014. The basis for the future hearing is to discuss matters relating to discovery of documents, site visits for expert witnesses etc.

At the previous hearing on 12 February 2014, costs were awarded against Metro in relation to the late withdrawal of a joinder application (Metro sought to join all operators in Victoria as part of their application on the basis that every rail operator in Victoria ran trains without headlights – Metro later withdrew this application).

So far, the VCAT appearances have been procedural—only a prelude to the hearing planned for later this year.

Right to Union Representation

Recent events have raised concerns with the Union over members deciding to represent themselves, or acting on advice given by those who profess to be legal experts because they have read legislation or maybe once stood next to a lawyer or just heard of a court's decisions regarding a situation similar to yours.

These situations have ended adversely for members.

Your Union membership entitles you to support from representatives who are proficient in industrial and safety laws and workplace instruments. They will advocate on your behalf in various forums to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Union representation is a right and entitlement. You pay your fees: use the provided services!

When you forgo or decline Union representation and act on your own behalf, irreparable, irreversible damage may be done. It is this that has given rise to the saying, "Only a fool represents themselves."

Who Regulates the Regulators?

Under the Rail Safety Act, every Victorian rail operator must have a safety management system. This governs and ensures safety in the workplace. Since November 2009, there have been an unprecedented number of serious rail incidents and rail infrastructure failures, allegedly caused by 'fruit bats' and more recently 'rats'... What excuse will they think of next?

There has been a deafening silence from regulatory bodies – and even less activity. In one case, WorkSafe Inspectors attended the workplace and cancelled a Provisional Improvement Notice on the basis that no driver or member of the public had to date been injured. They argued that, given that there had numerous incidences before, there was no risk. This was in relation to vandals tampering with the Comeng train braking system.

There exists a notion that is known as the 'separation of powers.' This is a model for governance of a state or those in control of the state. The state is divided into various judicial branches, each with separate, independent powers and areas of responsibility—so that the powers of one branch are not in conflict with the powers associated with the other branches. In some circumstances, these powers overlap but do not usurp the function of each branch. This means that each regulatory body should function independently, free from government/other interference.

What seems to be the case with respect to railway projects and rail incidents is that a superficial process is undertaken in order to appear to satisfy the procedure—rather than being thorough, and producing or implementing the necessary changes on work sites.

Some examples of this include:

- Digital Train Radio System (DTRS), which has difficulty identifying the location of a train in the event of an emergency because of cell overlap... Remember this is an election year. There's no problem – let's switch it on anyway.
- Safety upgrades required to run X'trapolis trains on four new lines including the Frankston line, to be completed...It was a Liberal government election promise. But again there's no problem – let's run the trains anyway.

The current theme with passenger operators in Victoria is that whatever the government wants they are hell bent on ensuring that it happens at all costs. As a Union we cannot and will not bow to political pressure to appease the powers that be and sacrifice.

Metro Trains – Fair and Just Culture

This is the stated policy at Metro Train's 'A Fair and Just Culture Policy':

"Metro is committed to festering and reinforcing an open fair and Just Culture."

"A Just Culture environment encourages open and honest dialogue with an aim to learn from highlighted safety and performance issues raised by its members. Through consistency in its application, fairness is promoted, reinforcing accountability and development from any learning while recognising the normal limits of human

performance as influenced by the rail system and that error will occur."

A member of the driving grade raised a concern about inappropriate behavior by a manager that could have contributed to passing a signal at danger.

The response included the following excerpts;

"After reviewing your allegations we have determined to dismiss the complaint without conducting an investigation... I would like to take this opportunity to remind you should complaints be found to be vexatious in nature, then employees may be subject to disciplinary action which may include up to termination of employment."

Here lies the question: how do you dismiss an allegation without conducting any investigation and then threaten the employment of a Driver indirectly by using the word 'employees'? This hardly seems fair or just.

Corporate Governance

There have changes to FairWork legislation as a result of the corruption and misappropriation of union funds within the Health Services Union. This topic has been the subject of much media attention—for example: allegations of union credit card misuse against Craig Thompson.

As a result of the changes, union officials who are charged with the responsibility to oversee the financial management of their organisation shall be given training

to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities and accountabilities.

The RTBU National Office has established a set of rules and procedures that deal with all purchases of goods and services in addition to tendering principles. These changes will also include strict reporting obligations.

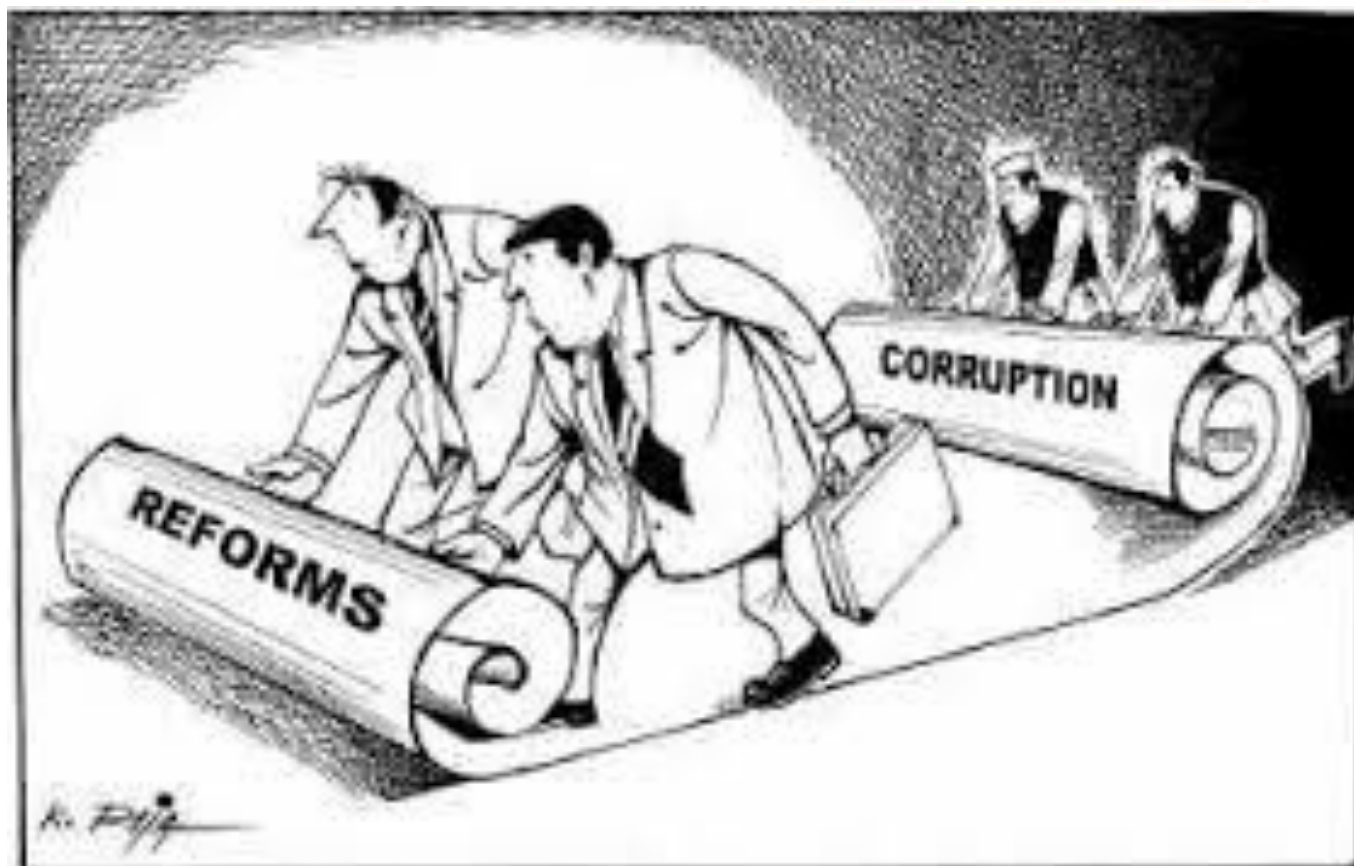
Changes to legislation also include a requirement to disclose personal interest or conflict of interests.

Metro Female Facilities Update

It took discussions in Victorian Parliament and an article in *The Age* newspaper before Metro Trains was shamed into upgrading female facilities.

Currently Metro Trains have engaged consultants to review the metropolitan rail network with the view to fund and improve female facilities. The program will commence at Flinders Street station and progressively rolled out across the system.

Let's hope the project is not done on the cheap...



V/LINE REPORT

By John Marotta

Divisional Vice-President

Wayne Hicks

V/Line Passenger



V/line new Chief Executive Officer has re-shuffled management to create a new layer of Executive General Managers. A few General Managers have left the service, while others have been moved into other roles. If you think that is not gearing up for privatization, you're mistaken.

Maintenance on rolling stock (Z cars) and various other faults is not being attended to. Z carriage's fleet has now seen reduced operations due to cracked bogies for nearly a year. 12 carriages remain out of service.

Maintenance levels have gone to extreme low levels with the new excuses coming forward, such as; that the fault was not reported by the driver, that the car's office has not received the fault, and (lucky last) that the fitters did not know about the fault. Crews are advised to insure the faults are reported through the car's office and the fault book. Make sure you also get a fault number.

When the fitters do attend faults on trains and are unable to rectify the fault, drivers are being asked whether they will run the train. Just be reminded that you are not compelled to run the train until the defect has been addressed. Don't be intimidated into running with defects.

Additionally, super lubes and Cco exams are being pushed out to less frequent intervals. Air conditioning units have not been having their pre-summer servicing and are not being maintained to acceptable levels for the summer months. On predicted over-36 Celsius days, N carriage sets are being terminated at Regional Capital Cities before the day heats up, with passengers forced to change to rubber wheels (buses) to continue on their journey, followed by the reverse on the return journey (bus then train).

Track condition/maintenance – better late than never.

A Velocity Train in the bank siding fell in the dirt and the track gang worked all night to repair the points. The second train to travel over the same set of points bit the dust before the gangers got to the carpark.

A freight train was wrong-routed through the arrival yard while V/Line train preparations were taking place. A meeting was held and the outcome was that no freight train would run through the arrivals V/Line area.

High-speed testing was successfully conducted on signal overlaps of up to 160 km p/hr on the new signalling arrangement between Sunshine and Deer Park West.

N.C.C. (cars' office) is trying to determine expiry time

frames for fire extinguishers and also fault deferment for certain faults. Drivers are to make sure trains are fit for service as per policies, procedures and work instructions.

Trains are not being examined on both sides within the 72 hour rule/procedure and without any recording process or documentation. Management have been advised to implement a work instruction.

There are rumours of unqualified staff moving standard gauge locomotives and freight wagons onto a Broad Gauge turntable tracks at Seymour. Watch this space.

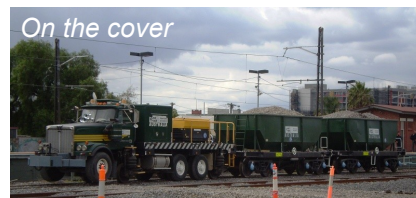
Billy Warden and Derrick Hill have retired recently. We would like to wish them and their family all the best.

The OH&S elections state wide within V/Line are currently working through the process.

The RRL (Regional Rail Link) from Spencer St to Manor is a 50 billion dollar project and is 18 months ahead of schedule. Though this hasn't yet been announced, it looks likely that it will be opened in April 2015. It will include new platforms at Footscray, West Footscray (new station), Sunshine (new station), Tarneit (new station) and Wyndham Vale – and a 160 km/hr train corridor.

The road transferable locomotive has made resurgence on the regional rail network between Footscray and Sunshine and is also carting two ballast wagons. Questions were raised through V/Line and the RRL group as to the accreditation of the operators and, more importantly, in locations where parallel running is occurring, personnel are not trained in the rules and regulations and safe working procedures to prevent mishaps with other operators. As a consequence, the RTL has been removed from service at that location and the ballast wagons have been removed as well. We are waiting on a further follow-up meeting to validate the operators' qualifications.

Inquiries have been made as to who the driver is and the qualifications obtained to use this as a train, surprise no one appears to know who the driver is or how validation to utilise the rolling stock was obtained. This astounds us as to how accreditation was given.



An agreement has been reached with the Locomotive Division and EDI Downer to fence a location for the fitters to be able to move locomotives in and out of the workshops at South Dynon locomotive depot. This was fenced off by having derail blocks and red lights to prevent limits of shunt and also to stop other operators encroaching on that area. It has now come to light that the manager at South Dynon wishes to remove the second person from the locomotive and affect driver-only locomotive movements and shunting operations. We are seeking a meeting with EDI to work through these issues.

METRO REPORT

By Paris Jolly

Secretary—Metropolitan
Sub-Divisional Committee



Training Scheme Update

As members would be aware, changes have been made to the driver training scheme. The scheme was previously 73 weeks long, gaining you a qualification to operate all rolling stock over the entire network, obtaining Level 4 driver qualification.

The Collective Agreement now sets out time frames as to how long it should now take to attain a Level 4 driver qualification:

1. The first stage is 38 weeks. In this, the trainee will complete classroom training and in-field training with OJTs.
2. The second stage is when the trainee reaches Level 2. This comprises of 35 weeks of experiential learning on restricted routes and rolling stock.
3. The third stage comprises of a further 26 weeks. At this time the Trainee will go back with an OJT and learn the other half of the network and the remaining rolling stock.

The total length of the course is now 99 weeks to gain Level 4 qualifications.

Due to the complexities of the network and the inability to adhere to the above restrictions, it is currently taking between 111 to 121 weeks to obtain Level 4 qualifications. As the pay scales in the Agreement are set on time-based intervals, the trainees are receiving the pay rises in accordance with the Agreement.

There have been numerous concerns raised by trainees regarding not getting the required driving time between assessments. Due to the scheme being competency-based, these concerns can be alleviated by allowing more time between assessments.

This has been done on numerous occasions when a request was made for assistance from the Union.

Metro Female Facilities

On a recent inspection of Flinders Street, several disused rooms were pointed out to a human resources manager for prospective female toilets and facilities. The HR manager was unaware of what was in the rooms and seemed uninterested in the fact that these rooms had been flagged before with Metro to no avail.

The Locomotive Divisions applauds Metro's decision to employ more female drivers; however, alongside this they need to get serious about providing the appropriate

facilities for them.

Currently, Metro cannot provide enough lockers for their female trainee drivers and, in many locations, the girls are required to use unisex toilets or even the public toilets.

WorkSafe has been contacted regarding the state of the facilities/ the lack thereof - though they believe that unisex toilets are sufficient. This is contrary to the WorkSafe compliance codes, however they are the governing body on safety so it would appear they make the rules up as they go along.

Uniform is also still an issue in particular for our pregnant drivers. The current issue is not fit for purpose.

Drivers Relieving Expenses

All Drivers are entitled to relieving expenses when they relieve at a depot other than their home depot if they are not on the voluntary relieving list. The payment will be made for related car expenses per kilometre in accordance with the Australian Tax Office schedule.

The extent of your travel pay is dependent upon whether you are on an off roster or if it is a rostered shift. If you are on an off roster, you can claim from your place of residence to the relieving location and return. If it is a rostered shift, you are entitled to claim from your home depot to your relieving depot and return.

The distance travelled can be verified by using Google maps or WhereIs. Forms are available from the sign on area and should be submitted to your manager.

Injured?

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RTBU Locomotive
Division Members**

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- *Conditions apply

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SIGNAL SIGHTING REPORT—METRO

By David Mortimer

It has been a little while since Craig Haber left Metro to take up a position at V/Line. We all wish Craig all the best. These will be big boots to fill as Craig did a powerful amount of work within the system, trying to get the best outcome for the Metro driving grade.

To show how hard it is to please everyone all of the time, a good example is the co-actor at Mitcham on the down. When this signal was sighted originally, it should have been obvious that the final form of the cutting was still at points up to seven meters underground. Most of the sight had to be done from plans and comply with project requirements for headways.

Although not a continuous view from the platform (something that has come about from a consistent and persistent approach from all previous signal reps) the signal works fairly well giving the incredible constraints created by the project.

All the best, Craig!

CURRENT PROJECTS

RRL

RRL is close to completion for the Metro side. A final shutdown will be required to fit equipment to match the projected vision shown to some in the theatre.

We hope that when movie CGI is next used for training purposes, that outright errors, poor infill of future structures, foliage inappropriately placed, non-removal of private siding points protected by an auto, etc, etc, is passed on to someone who cares to vet (though it was interesting to watch a wrong line move from South Kensington to Sunshine being achieved with appropriate stops and that bloody whistle). Removal of material below the Anderson Road Bridge has been slow but this has been done to issues of a fuel line to the airport in the proximity and removal of bluestone in an awkward environment. Some more signals between Footscray and South Kensington are to be added as part of this project.

In parallel with this project conversion of the two position singles on the Race Course line, and improvement to signalling from Kensington to Essendon are approaching the time when they will be turned on. The showground and race course will come under Metrol control and be fully seen on their board.

Springvale

By the time this edition will be printed, this project will be completed. Again the bulk of the sighting of this project has been completed off plans because no corridor was available to walk until the 19 March. I know with work along this corridor that attempts were made to pick up and replace as many light style signals along this corridor with LEDs.

FUTURE PROJECTS

Renewals

Metro are required to replace a number of light style signals with LEDs as part of their franchise obligations. The attempt has been to group signals to get best "bang for buck." Current financial year renewals will be centred on Altona Junction with these signals to be completed around April 2014. This has become a busy area with increased services and consistently we come into and out of the junction on stop or bottom yellows. These signals are consistently washed out by the morning and afternoon sun so conversion to LED should assist. There will be discussion soon on priorities for next year's funding budget. I have indicated concern over light style homes at the entrance to the MURL portals particularly at bogie height where the brake dust, etc. gathers on the signal. Remember when maintenance included cleaning signals, painting masks and masts, and removing graffiti, rather than the current "we will maintain the signal when it breaks down" approach?

Calder Park Stabling Sidings.

There will be a big push to get this project going to show government action on public transport. Word is that this facility will be as large as Craigieburn when finished but construction will be staged over a period of time. The initial plan is for three sidings capable of holding 2 x 6 car units. With access to the yard from the city end only. At this point no station is to be built along with the yard. No indication of a time frame on the station could be picked up, but within a year of the sidings ..??.. Maybe, in the fullness of time, at the appropriate juncture.... The current project throws up a few problems with operation but to this point we wait to see what the final form for this stage will be.

Frankston / Carrum

Sighting has been done to improve signalling and track work at these stations. It is the intention where possible to improve stabling facilities, simplify point work and remove two position signalling. At the end of this I expect that some two position signals will be orphaned on the Stony Point unless some funding comes along to remove the last two position repeater in the Metro operation. Carrum changes will hopefully include the ability to enter the down yard from the down platform as well as the up platform.

SPADs

We are still not travelling well with SPADs. Although down by three from this time last year, it still a frightening matter.

Foliage at present represents a contributing factor in some SPADs. The system is chaotic, there seems to be no plans to carry out work quickly and to a level required to aid in signal sighting. One could say there is no understanding of what is required, and when work is carried out it is hard to understand why it is done.

A good 200 meters of material has been removed around the Heatherdale. It doesn't seem to be an area prone to bush fire, and suicides at this point are not exceptional. There is no signals in the area so why do this? At the same time, many signals along the Burnley group are in the intimate embrace of many bushes and trees...

I know it is annoying but keep on reporting foliage, and all other issues of graffiti etc.

SIGNAL SIGHTING REPORT—V/LINE

By Colin Holly

REGIONAL RAIL LINK

Regional Rail Link work is well under way with the final signalling installed between Sunshine and Footscray complete on the main suburban. The adjacent RRL regional lines will be completed in around 4 weeks during the next big April shut. The RRL signals will be co-located with the Main Suburban signals, where the speed is 130 k/h between West Footscray and Sunshine only every second signal will be installed on the RRL lines. The height of the post mount signals is around 5m above rail, with tri-colour lamp units for intended viewing under the overhead. Where there is inefficient clearance between tracks the signals are installed on gantries, to ensure they remain on the left-hand side of the track to which they apply.

The final signalling has been installed between Sunshine and Deer Park West Junction, together with signals protecting Deer Park Junction for movements to and from Manor. The track work at Manor Junction is complete with signal gantries waiting to be stood up. Ballast trains have been operating over the flyover at Manor for track compaction. During testing between Sunshine and Deer Park West Junction a Vlocity was used to test tracks, approach times of level crossings and focus signals. The vehicle was also used to test the TPWS, the down home protecting Deer Park Junction was restored to stop with the train on the approach at 155 k/h. The TPWS over speed sensor activated prior to the signal, the train came to rest before the next signal, ensuring the design was compliant.

We also tested for a train that may fail to react to the medium speed warning aspect, this is on approach to the Junction when a route has not been pulled. The 48k/h over speed sensor intervened on the outer Automatic signal at 150 k/h bring the train to a stand before the Home as designed. The new signalling has allowed higher speeds on the up, with 130k/h Deer Park Junction to Ardeer for railcars and 110k/h for loco hauled. Ardeer to Sunshine VL 130 k/h, Sprinters 115 K/h and loco hauled 100 k/h. The long term 95 k/h TSR on approach to Fitzgerald road has been removed, as the short warning on the level crossing was rectified. Sound barriers will be installed along portions of the RRL corridor. They will be 1.8m high, constructed of 3mm steel plate in a folded arrangement to reduce graffiti and in a rusted finish. When placed near pedestrian crossings it will have small Perspex windows to reduce the closed in effect that the public may experience from such a solid structure. The colour of the windows will be purple and blue.

The image above right is a sample of the sound barrier prior to its installation:



WARNCOOT LOOP

Signalling was to be commissioned on 21st March at Warncoot Loop, it was deferred as a result of a track in the loop not lifting. The signalling was focused and bagged for a later date. The loop has outer repeaters, home arrivals and departures signals from each road in the loop. TPWS has been fitted on the arrival and departure signals. No approach clearing is required, as TPWS and 65 k/h points provide rollover protection. Simultaneous arrival of trains will occur, as an overlap is provided beyond the home departure signals. CCTV is provided back to Control for train order requirements. When the signalling control fails between Control and Warncoot, the loop will go into automatic mode, signalling trains into opposing roads. Key switches are provided at the departure signals and when instructed drivers can operate the loop locally. Paths are provided from the arrival home to the points for checking and operating under failure mode. Paths are also provided in the loop at the departure signals. As the departure signals are over 300m from the points, an order will be issued to the driver with instructions to check and or operate the points after passing the signal when no detection is available.

Below is the loop under construction and drivers access paths:



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UNIFORM OR UNICORN...?

By Danielle Walker
Of the V/Line Drivers' Uniform Committee



Do you know what Uniform and Unicorn have in common at V/line? They're both **mythical**.

There was movement at the station.... But, unfortunately for the 'Uniform Committee,' it has come to a complete stand still.

Since the start of 2013, the committee has been trying to implement changes to the MEN'S uniform, and introduce a WOMEN'S uniform. We had two meetings in 2013, to no avail. Apparently, there was a recent meeting, to which we weren't invited.

Women drivers have waited patiently for over 4 YEARS for management to supply them with a Women's Uniform, and in 2014 - we're still waiting!!

How long is a piece of string? This, colleagues is the short version. Hopefully next time we can tell you there's been an improvement.

I have had discussions with the relevant manager, Mr Rod King, who advised that he will speak to the new manager, Ms Judith Stermann (Executive General Manager Service Delivery) to progress this matter.

Here's hoping....

RADIO TESTING PARTY REPORT

By Andrew Morley
Radio Test Party Coordinator

2014 is going to be a busy year for the Radio Test Party. Along with our normal annual NUTR and RFR testing throughout the V/Line system we also have to test the new RRCN (Regional Rail Communications Network) - or ICE as most of us drivers know it as.

NUTR

Spread out over the year, the Radio Test Party test every kilometre of track, along all corridors, on the Train to Base Radio. It takes two up and down trips, over two days to complete, except for Marshall which we do the two trips in one day. We have two VicTrack techs involved in the test, one at Centrol, who we talk with instead of distracting the controller, and one accompanying us in the cab. A few issues were picked up in the 2013 test year, but these were fixed, re-tested and passed by the new year. Testing for the state is about to resume again in April. Even though ICE radio will start to be introduced in the coming months, the NUTR will still be up and working alongside it, for at least the next two years. This is because the V/Line fleet will take a while to fit out with the new radios. The S.G. to Albury will be the first corridor to have the new ICE system introduced. ARTC plan to have NUTR system turned off around August/September and the new ICE system up and running.

ICE

Our new communications system will operate off Telstra's 3G Digital Mobile Phone System. Our old NUTR system have base stations strategically placed along the corridors that receive our Train to Base radio calls and then send them by landline to Centrol in Melbourne. The ICE radio unit has 3G as well as two UHF radios and a Satellite phone built into it. You make Centrol calls or other operational phone calls through the 3G side. If the 3G system is down or in an area with no signal, the calls will default through to the Satellite system. The UHF radio is also built into the system, unlike now where we have a separate NUTR and UHF radio. Hopefully this will un-clutter our cabs a little.

Lionel Britton and I took locomotive P13 on a run to Albury on Feb 25th and 26th, to test the ICE radio. This locomotive is our only piece of rolling stock to have been as of yet fitted out with a functioning ICE. We had a radio engineer from a company called 4Tel from Sydney accompany us on this run. We were limited on how many Control calls we could place to Junee Control, due to controls workload, instead we placed 3G and Satellite phone calls to different people and other trains as we proceeded to Albury and back. All calls worked well and were so much clearer than current

LOCOMOTIVE INFORMATION NOTICE – P01

Issued by Fleet Engineering 03/10/2013

Rev 0

ICE Communication Installation Standard Gauge Loco P13

Drivers, Conductors and Maintenance staff are to take note of the following:

ICE Communication

The NUTR train radio and local train radios will be removed from P13 and replaced with an ICE communication system. The communication system control module contains two 3G phones one Iridium satellite phone, two UHF radios and a GPS unit.

Switching ON

A radio "on" "off" switch will remain on the control stand in its current location but the existing emergency button will be removed. When the switch is turned on the ICE unit screen will light up and conduct a self-test. During the test the lights around the Controller and Emergency buttons will be green. The light around the Controller button will turn blue and the light around the Emergency button will turn red indicating that the ICE unit completed its start-up and self-test sequence.

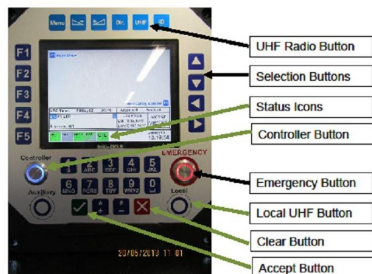


Fig:1 – ICE Control Panel

Satellite signal for the whole of the trip and at all times we had a clear signal. This was also happened when we proceeded the length of the Brumby Street Tunnel at Footscray. None of our Control or phone calls dropped out along the trip. One call we made went for 15 kilometres and did not drop out or break up. The Geofencing on the ICE worked well,

one channel that is selected, you can hear chatter from both units at once. Having two UHF channels chatting away at the same time could lead to some confusion. If a driver is receiving a caution order over the safe working channel, the last thing he needs is an LTR transmission taking his concentration away from the task at hand. We are asking for the non-live channel to be muted til the driver selects it by pressing either the F3 or F4 button.

Sometime in the next month or so, the Radio Test Party will be wheeling out A66 from Sth Dynon to start ICE radio testing on the broad gauge. Unlike testing on the standard gauge, we will be able to make a lot more tests to train control. Hopefully, like NUTR testing, a technician will be provided at Centrol to take our calls, leaving the controller himself in peace.

All up I think the new radio system will be a step forward compared to the system we have now, though it will take a little bit of getting used to. Many Pacific National and Country Link drivers we have spoken to have said that they liked the ICE system, but it is a steep learning curve before you can operate it professionally and to its full potential.

automatically changing from Adelaide control to Juneec on the down and vice versa on the up at Somerton Loop.

Issues we have found so far with the ICE system are mainly things that can be fixed with software changes and updates. The Directories in the unit are mainly made up for trains that operate over the other side of the border on the ARTC system. In the Operations listings in the phone directory, for example, we have numbers for the Kalgoorlie signal box and the Broadmeadows in Newcastle signal box. I doubt if any V/Line train will ever go that far afield, so we have asked to remove any of the numbers not suitable to our running. This is so we don't have to scroll through all of Australia's signal boxes just to place a call to Seymour signaller. We will need to check all the Victorian numbers listed to make sure they are right. When we tried the Newport box number we got the Newport shunters and Sunshine's boxes number was greeted with a Telstra disconnected recording. The UHF directory will be cleaned up with the removal of blank channels and channels not used by Vline. Another issue found was with the keypad. While placing the T.D. number into the unit, we have discovered that like an old style mobile phone, you have to key through T, U and V before you get to 8 and so on with the other digits. This will mean a lot of key pushing just to enter 8606. The ICE unit, again, is set up for ARTC interstate running, where T.D. numbers are mix of letter and numbers. For example the XPT on the up to Melbourne would be ST23 and a freight train could be 5MB5. It's only a small thing but will save time and mistakes within our Victorian environment, to have numbers before letters come up when a key is pushed. This can and will be fixed with a software change.

Last major issue is that we have two live UHF radios in our cabs with the ICE unit. A Driver can program each radio with any UHF channel they like. To make a channel available to transmit on the driver need only push F3 or F4 button to what corresponds with what the driver has programmed. This makes life easier to scroll back and forth with whatever channels the driver might need. Problem is that even though you can only transmit on the

HANDHELD RADIOS

Lionel Britton and I have been trialling four new handheld radios. Two were from Motorola and two from a company called Tait. The need for a new handheld has been brought about by the soon to be life expiry of the old Motorola MTX838s. These old Motorola's are not compatible in the Off Train Radio mode with the new ICE units. The newer Motorola GP339s are not manufactured any more, so a new handheld has to be sourced. Out of the 4 radios we have chosen the Tait TP8100. All radios had good battery life, approx 3 working shifts between charges. They were also lighter and easier to handle then the MTX8388. In the end it came down to screens. Of all the radios the Tait P8100, which we have chosen, had the smaller screen but had the larger font making it easier out of all of them to read. It was also the smallest and lightest of the lot. Apparently this unit is used by some of the CFA brigades.

DTRS

DTRS is the name of Metros new digital train radio system. It is running behind schedule but will hopefully be commissioned sometime in the last quarter of this year. It's unknown yet how, but we have been advised that both Vline and Metro drivers will be able to communicate between each other through their respective radio systems. Will keep you informed whenever any information comes to hand.

I'd like to thank Lionel Britton, Tony Coscarella, Robert Brown, Kevin Hicks and Rhett Stone for their help on the Radio Test Party for the last year. If anyone has any problems with any of the radios, please put it down on the green form and place it in the RTBU box in the drivers meal room at SCS and Lionel or I will have it looked in to for you.

CAB COMMITTEE REPORT

By Karl Costanzo
Cab Committee Coordinator

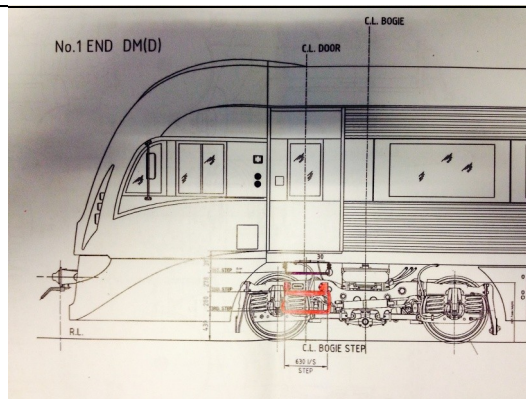
Recently, a document V38 was released to drivers. Its purpose was to 'instruct' drivers in the operation of the sanding equipment on a Vlocity during a wheel slip/slide event. Any driver knows Vlocities are light on their feet under certain conditions such as light drizzly rain on the rail. They also know how scary it is when, on the approach to a platform, the wheels lock up, slide, grip, lock up again and generally buck and kick their way into the station without much (if any!) reduction of speed.

There have been a lot of overshoots due to the fact that Vlocity trains can't and don't hold their feet. One, that involved VL48 at Riddles Creek, over shot by at least six car lengths. On investigation, it was revealed that the wheel slip probes on one of the trailer bogies were wired to the opposite axles, causing the sliding axle to continue to slide and the other to dump its brake cylinder pressure, reducing the braking effort. An audit of the fleet found seven Vlocities in total with this fault. They were rectified, sent back into service expecting no more problems. VL48 again lost its feet in Yarragon platform some months later. This time, the driver was aware that the train was experiencing wheel slide during braking and had given plenty of time to stop, some 2 km's out, yet still as the train approached the platform at low speed, it began sliding and carried the train well past the end of the platform, some 200 meters.

Every time this occurs, if the train involved has no recorded faults, the blame is placed on rail contamination or adverse rail conditions. Bad rail or not, the slip/slide system should bring the train under control within the prescribed stopping distance. It seems it is more about preserving wheels than actual stopping.

Regardless of whether the Vlocity is a two or three car set, it is always set up with four sandboxes. These are behind the powered bogie on both sides of the cab ends. When the train is powering and wheel slip is detected, sand is automatically applied to the rearmost bogie of the train. This means in a three car set, one bogie in six gets sand. When the train is under braking, and wheel slide is detected, sand is automatically applied behind the leading powered bogie of the leading cab only. This means in a three car set, the leading bogie doesn't get any sand (part of the design to preserve track circuits), the sand that is thrown forward onto the railhead at speed is supposed to be then picked up by the trailer bogie of the leading unit and the rest of the train. My question is: how much sand is left on the railhead after the above description, taking into account the speed of the train, vibration of the train through the rail, rail head profile and if any wind is present? There is the length of the car between bogies before the trailer bogie reaches it. To release a document telling drivers how to control wheel slide is no way to face or rectify inadequately designed or malfunctioning equipment.

Among the inaccuracies of this document, it is incorrect to assume that drivers apply release to the brakes during a wheel slide event.



Drivers regulate the brake in the braking zone of the power/brake controller. The wheel slip/slide software still would operate in accordance with the rate of wheel slide regardless of the brake cylinder pressure. I defy anyone to head into a platform whilst experiencing severe wheel slide, to 'set and forget' the brake and let the wheel slip system take over. Drivers' experiences prove this. In addition to controlling the train to a safe stop on the platform, drivers have a duty of care to their equipment, to prevent wheel flats. Although, the wheel slide has been so bad as to warrant the use of the emergency brake.

For some time now, the Cab Committee has been calling for a for a slip/slide braking test to be conducted, simulating contaminated rail surfaces. (It seems responsible parties are reluctant to produce the original slip/slide type test results). This is to prove the system has failings that need to be identified and fixed to keep rail staff and the public (both travelling and at large) safe.

N class

The ICE radio fit out for 'N' class locos has progressed with a location found and agreed upon. It will now be placed on the left hand side pillar in place of the speedo, with the speedo relocating to a position in honour of the 'A' class locos. This is to allow easy operation of the ICE screen, as well as meeting the requirements of driver only operation in terms of maintaining maximum vision through the windscreens. For instructors who have keen sight of the speedo: it is still able to be viewed from the instructor's seat. An initial fit out to a selected 'N' class will take place before it is converted onto standard gauge. A66 has been fitted with ICE radio and will be used for broad gauge network testing.

Vlocity steps

Progress on a new cab access step has seen it mounted with bolts to the bogie frame. The top step remains attached to the body, with the lower two now as wide as the top step on the bogie. One Vlocity will be fitted with the modified steps at one end for a trial. It is intended that the new build units will be factory fitted and the rest of the fleet will be progressively fitted.

TALKBACK WITH HINCH

By Michael A Hinch

Passenger Sub-Division—Southern Cross

Summertime Blues

Comrades,

In case some of you Sherlocks hadn't noticed, summer has been with us for a while. Along with the summer heat there comes a nasty little compulsory track security blanket known as the WOLO. The WOLO, as you all know, is a speed restriction imposed upon the entire system when the weather forecast for any given area is predicted to be over 36c.

It has one small problem, well err... perhaps a *few* problems. The WOLOs are implemented some three days in advance, depending on the long range forecast. Sometimes the forecast is not exactly accurate. Hence, the WOLOs are forced upon the system whether it needs it or not. Timetables for Joe Public are advertised to take into account the extra time required to run any given service and management therefore self-imposes a point where it (to its own way of thinking) crosses the Rubicon. You can't go back. This train must run to a speed seventy kilometers per hour less than its line performance standard (in the case of a V/locity) for no good reason. To cater to the late running of the chosen services, some others have to be cancelled and replaced with buses. Boy, would I love to have a part ownership in a bus company in summer.

There is no policy instrument by which normal train running can be reinstated to cater for normal timetable needs in the case of the WOLO being unnecessary. When you consider that we have track ties which are designed to specifically prevent heat buckling, the policy can only be described as silly bloody mindedness. I have spoken before in this publication about the politics of blame and the fact that no one is game enough to make a decision in case they are the ones subject to litigation if something goes wrong. Yes you freight blokes (I still regard myself as an honorary freight bloke), I hear your pain too. Slowed to ridiculous speeds for the sake of a Tatts Lotto-odds heat buckling.

So many services are cancelled for no good reason and the traveling public is treated like sheep at a stock race in the summer heat and it really pisses me off. Good people pay for transport Myki ticket fares and should be able to expect the best deal available. So let's imagine this scenario. Management advertises the WOLO restriction forward advice for three days hence with a travel advisory condition. "Customers are advised to check the company web site or phone the company advisory number if forecasted conditions do not exceed 36c. In this event, trains will run to the normal timetabled schedules." Is that rocket science?! Management might

scoff at such a suggestion and dismiss it as unworkable. To that I would merely say that they are admitting that they are incapable of operating in the 21st century.

Exhibit A . . . WOLO nonsense.

On a recent fine summer's day, I reported with my trainee conversion driver for duty to run the down evening Swan Hill Pass. We were informed by the Manpower that the service had been altered to run EMPTY CARS to Swan Hill. "What the. . . ?" So I contacted "The Office" (most of you will know which one I mean) and they confirmed an empty car movement from Spencer Street to Swan Hill. "Freakin' why?" I asked. They informed me that it was because of the heat policy sent down from upper management (mind you, it was only 29C). "But don't worry," they said. "We have commissioned buses to run the customers to Swan Hill."

Now hang on just a second. We were expected to run a perfectly good N car set, empty to Swan Hill, whilst buses picked up the customers and ran parallel with the train. We were not permitted to stop anywhere to pick up anyone even though we had a full crew of conductors in the cars with catering facilities etc.

I was later informed by "The Office" that apparently some of the N car sets had experienced minor problems in the heat and therefore upper management had decreed that only empty car movements were permitted on WOLO days. ARE YOU PEOPLE FOR REAL?! Does V/Line consider itself a business which services its patrons to the best of its ability or is it just an agent for the wealth and welfare of bus companies? Don't worry, it gets better...

The next day, this particular train was intended to form the lunchtime up service... which was cancelled due to the heat. My mate and I then duly travelled by taxi from Swan Hill to Bendigo (at a cost to the taxpayer of around 300 bucks) to run the half point stage of our train to Melbourne, with a V/Locity and not the catering-equipped classic fleet service.

Now let's recap. We ran empty to the destination, parallel with the bus service. The train is fine and fit for service and the buses are late and packed full. We were sent on this mission with the full knowledge of those that make the decisions, that the next three days had a temperature prediction many degrees hotter than that first day. To say the least, the customers were pretty well pissed off. We experienced their displeasure first hand at every station. Can I express to you the readership, exactly how distressing it is for us to be forced to run express through stations where we are meant to stop and see the anger on the rural customers' faces when they see THEIR train, upon which they rely, sail straight through? I have to tell you, it is soul destroying. My trainee and I felt genuinely miserable about the entire stupid futile mission. We have been running these same car sets for many years under the same conditions. Many a tax payers dollar has gone into the upgrade of the air conditioning systems of these vehicles so why the Dickens are we running the system in such an amateur fashion? Some of us pride ourselves

in our customer delivery and professionalism. It is a pity that management too often will not permit us to practice this.

The same stupidity had apparently been repeated on several more occasions. Is there perhaps a clandestine agenda here to try and prove the classic fleet incapable of providing good service and hasten its redundancy? Well Mr. Mulder: are you being stooged?

Whatever happened to Baby Jane?

The bushfire crisis got me to thinking. Back in the day, we used to have a Bushfire Train. It was a set of around eight bogie vehicle water tankers which were (to my memory) equipped with the ability to refresh the water tanks of CFA fire trucks and could be delivered at short notice to any bushfire hot spot. This consist had a defence platform equipped with a water canon to protect the train but its primary function was to back up the CFA. It was always fully tested and primed with water at all times throughout the summer fire season and had its own special road in amongst the Ice Roads of the old Melbourne yard (the old timers will remember that). Where it was kept is no longer relevant, it's just a part of the story, but does it still exist? Is it somewhere in moth balls? Even if it was sent off to Japan, like so much other scrap rolling stock to return as Hondas and Toyotas, could not a present day government just once, learn a lesson from the past and allow rail to once again do its bit in serving the public in a traditional role? Rail is capable of so many things that history has forgotten. To have the ability to deliver a thousand ton of water to a water staging point in any given fire situation to assist the CFA in this day and age would be a modern day innovation, borne of a lesson learnt from the past. Just sayin'.

In the category of "What the..."

We recently experienced some corridor shut downs to allow ongoing works for the new Regional Rail Link. And it's going gangbusters by the way, can't praise it highly enough. The Spencer Street station was like a ghost town and also saw its fair share of works and renovation. The platforms at Spencer Street have some very impressive, sturdy fencing arrangements around the platform perimeters as well as the down ramps which descend into the catacombs beneath. High grey colored metal fencing. The fencing has been there since the Southern Crustacean roof was installed, which is not so long ago. I am sure it was in very good order... So, very clearly it needed to be replaced with... identical brand new high, grey colored sturdy metal fencing. That's right, they tore down the metal fencing, which was in as new condition to replace it with identical new fencing. We collectively turned our heads to one side like a Labrador listening to a violin in awe and wonder at the means by which money can so inventively be wasted. Go figure. . .

More "What the....?"

I personally love this one. This illustrates grand thinking par excellence. This is not an illusion nor is it a mirage. We are looking in the north down direction at Spencer

Street. On our left are the car sidings and on our right is #1 box. This permanently affixed sign guards a four and a half foot gap between the wing fencing and some metal grating, beyond which is a footpath:



I eagerly await the arrival of the new eighteen inch wide vehicles which will surely be intended for use in this area and further intended to squeeze between the sign and the fence. Marvelous stuff!

Communication breakdown

I recently ran a down Eastern service from the new platform fifteen at Spencer Street. The departure time came and went with no greater variety of colors on the home departure other than red. Some minutes went by with no apparent intersecting train movements around me and yet we remained tethered by the constraints of this signal. Only one thing for it, I felt: go to the post phone and find out what's what. Armed with my trusty 5p key, I ventured forth to have speaks with the Metrol Controller. I picked up the brand new post phone hand receiver only to discover.... It doesn't work. Bugger... So I went over to the brand new platform sixteen post phone and guess what? That one doesn't work either. So I had to engage my meager ration of clairvoyance or telepathy or whatever it's called and mentally will the controller into action and happily that worked more efficiently than the post phone. I suppose that moment coincided with his return from the dunny, some six minutes after scheduled departure time. Technology ain't much good if you don't hook it up mate.

On a happier note "Hi Ho the Merrioh, Metrol's fixed its radio." Miracles never cease to amaze. Rejoice ye all, Metrol can actually now be understood and clearly heard on the end-to-end ch#1 radio. No longer do they sound like Harry Beitzel, sitting in a closed box, talking through a didgeridoo. Now, if they would only leave it switched on so that we can contact them at any time rather than them only using it when they wish to summon our attention. Too much to hope for I suppose.

The games people play, or... "The Stimulator."

Most Pass drivers were recently indoctrinated into the regularly evolving, transitional world of the Regional Rail Link by way of a V/locity cab simulator. I will give its one due, the cab mock up is authentic in every respect. But that is where reality ends. I had my turn to play with this toy and when I emerged the stimulator boss bloke asked

me what I thought and I asked if he wanted the truth or a lie. "The truth of course," he said. "Ok, but you won't like it," I replied. "Try me", he said. "It's not a Simulator," I ventured. "Yes it is" / "no it's not," etc. went the verbal game.

"Ok, so what is it?" he asked. "It's a video game," I replied. Much gnashing of teeth and bemused looks ensued.

Let me clarify. The graphics in this thing bear no resemblance to reality. Last time I checked, there is no 2'6" gauge on the main line in Victoria. Truly that's what it looks like. The controls don't respond in any way or shape as they should (read: the brakes don't work) The throttle does not respond in the actual acceleration characteristics as they should relate to transmission "lock up" and the swapping of trans fluid between the pots, torque converter etc.

The driver's seat is described as full motion, but the last time I drove a V/locity (yesterday) I didn't notice the seat... leaning into a curve. Now that is bizarre. I came out of this thing with a headache and others anecdotally reported the same experience. There are constantly flashing lights in your eyes which nearly threaten to set off a psychotic episode and the image of the sleepers flashing beneath is positively hypnotic. The track layout presented to the operator bears no resemblance to the real locations and the only way I could work out where the hell I was by the graffiti I recognized on the walls of the buildings track side. As an instructor, I came away very confident that this thing will never supersede training at the throttle of a real train.

Don't get me wrong, this thing will be of good use in simulating fault finding, but only those faults that can be rectified in cab. Unfortunately some faults are rectified on the ground.

Off The Rails (You don't have to ride a motorbike... You just have to care.)

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the OTR, it is a group of drivers who raise money with the view of assisting other drivers who fall on hard times. The group is ably managed by Geoff and Bronnie Depomeroy, Shakey O'Malley and a dedicated committee structure. Can I assure you that they do an outstanding job? The pinnacle of their fund raising efforts is the annual motorcycle (mystery) ride and after party. These rides are sensational to us motorcycle enthusiasts and this year's ride did not disappoint.

My partner, Harley, and I joined the group at the meeting place at Gisborne for registration where Geoff gave us our ride instructions. The theme is: "it's not a race it's a ride." Safety is the priority. I have to hand it to young Depom and his boys, they really put the work into the organisation of this annual event. There is a ride captain (don't pass him or your arse will be sent home), there are the lieutenants who guard each turning point so that no one gets lost. And then there is "Tail gunner Shakey" who ensures that the slower riders aren't left behind, then

there are the support vehicles. At one stage we had to climb a mountain with very tight thin curves. Normally this would be a little dangerous in the event of oncoming traffic. No problem for OTR: they merely blocked the road to oncoming traffic, managed by two way radio and let the forty or so riders tackle the climb in complete safety.

From Gisborne we headed down to Bacchus Marsh then on to Anakie where we enjoyed a BBQ lunch. Then on to Inverliegh for a refreshing cool drink (In the 42c heat) before finally ending the day at Torquay at Geoff and Bronnie's place for the grand party. It was a long day's ride with marvelous winding roads.

The important part of this report is this: in this materialistic selfish world, it is rare to find a person let alone a group that actually cares about the welfare of their peers. That is the object of OTR. We as drivers are no different to any other group, as individuals we sometimes fall on hard times. That is where OTR shines. They can't move the earth, but they can and do try to make a difference. Their resources are of course finite but they actively seek out those amongst us that are in need of a leg up.

Anyone can join the OTR group and become what is known as a Medallion Member. Rest assured that the money raised goes to a good cause. For enquiries about membership call Geoff on 0439 022 779 or Shakey on 0427 513 087. I encourage you all to become a financial member and help out your work mates. **You don't have to ride a bike to be involved, you just have to care.**

Words of Wisdom

Finally, V/Line has recently produced a couple of DVD's which are intended to inspire the driving grade to collectively to take greater care in their daily duties. Read into that: don't have a SPAD. To this end, many people appear on the film telling us what we should and shouldn't do etc.

It never ceases to amaze me how some managers think and the things they come out with, most especially when they are not personally qualified in traction operations or safeworking. A particular manager on this recent vid can be quoted as saying "Drivers should not be looking in their mirrors unless they are departing a platform." Fantastic wisdom.

So the next time any driver has a hot box on their train or a customer is in trouble and the finger of blame is pointed at the driver for being unobservant, I feel confident that we can quote management's own documented philosophy that train cab rear view mirrors are ONLY to be viewed when departing a station.

I must acknowledge the assistance of my editorial wing man Paul Ewert (South Dynon), whom is a gem at picking up grammar and punctuation errors.

BEST OF THE BEST

By Rodney Beasley

A Day in the Life of PN Driver

Three days off, magnificent but back to the grind today. Geez I'm lucky to be one of the best of the best, employed by PNQ.

Due to start around 1730 hrs & work 82P5 up to Mackay, it's running a tad late but no real drama. Good run up to Mackay—two crosses and in the hole both times. That's okay. I'm 30 minutes off my path, so am fair game to receive a bit of Greek. Greeted by the Toll T.O.'s at Mackay, nice blokes, (geez I reckon they're lucky working for our future owners), wagons to come off and place but before that gotta clear the Toll terminal first. Warm night & one T.O. is fully dressed even has a long raincoat on. I guess he doesn't want to get wet if it rains, it is the wet season now.

A few moves and we're right to drag the outbound loading across to the station yard, pick up the inbound and place in Toll. Andrew (one of the T.O.'s), reckons there is a bit of mucking about when we place them as a crane is bugged. He'll let me know when we get in there. Place the first wagons, Andrew is at the loco, open the window and he tells me what has to be done. Window open all of 30 seconds, mossies everywhere, Andrew walks away... Hell where has he gone? Oh it's okay, he stepped into a puddle (only up to his knees,) imagine he couldn't see it due to the chest high grass. Geez they're lucky to be working for Toll.

"Peter you got those catch points?" "Yeah mate, I'm on them." "Okay Rod—head out towards Rocky about 200 metres to stop." Start moving backward and watch the mirror for Peter on the catch points. Better ease up, can't see him back there. Oh, there he is playing hide & seek in the chest-high grass. Did I tell you how lucky these T.O.'s are working for Toll, getting to play games at work as well? Finished placing wagons, right to head back to the station yard, short delay though as the Mail is due to arrive. Ah my relief calls—coming down to the Toll siding to relieve me.

In the motel by 0230, count 19 mossie bites on hands, face and legs, including inside ear. Now I know why Andrew was fully dressed—he forgot to have his Rid or Tropical Aeroguard bath before he came to work.

Did I tell ya how lucky I am to be one of the best of the best, working for PNQ?

Get to sleep around 3, the alarm clock goes off at 0800, (some motels call them 'cleaners'). At least I got 5 hours of sleep, I'll get a full night tonight at home. Called on availability for a 1020 start to work 87P6 home to Rocky. Have to pick up the loading I dragged out early this morning. I do the ground work with the Townsville driver on board. Shunt finished and start a brake test. With that done, the other driver wants to bolt. Ask him to sign a

brake certificate, doesn't understand why, explain to him, but he hasn't been informed of it, nor has anyone else in PNQ. It's only been about 4+ months of gentle education on this issue (brake testing and documentation), but I sleep deliriously well at night, knowing that I'm so lucky being one of the best of the best working for PNQ. Things will be fixed soon.

Run home is uneventful, just a bit slower due to PN01 being 80 km/h restricted, on account of an ever-so-slight misjudgement by one of the best of the best, and wheel flats resulting. No doubt if we keep it running around for long enough the flats will disappear.

Knock off at 1805 and due to start at 0730 hrs next day, I'll get a good night in bed.

Phone rings, 0428, still dark, stumble out of bed, trying not to wake the house. "Yeah want ya for a 0600 departure on 87P4," the incoming driver says. I mumble a response and hang up. Shower in a sleep fog and wander down stairs. Brain starts to engage: shit what time did I knock off last night? Check diary—oh, it was 1805, so can't start till 0605, which makes a 0625 departure. Ring incoming driver back and let him know the story, Service Delivery Supervisor must have misread my availability, don't actually make mistakes when you're the best of the best. Even though there is a best of the best gentleman's agreement not to be called early unless absolutely necessary.

Arrive at station and proceed to the loco, incoming driver keen to go home as had a long night, even the best of the best need sleep. Ask him if he shunted at Mackay, which he hadn't. Jump on board, check updated load sheet, train shunted at Merinda and previous sheet x Townsville. No brake documentation re wagons attached at Merinda. Inform Rocky 'A' cabin that I will be a while before departure due to issues with train. Incoming Driver heard and came back wondering what was wrong." I need to do a brake test on wagons from Merinda account no documentation". He offered and performed brake test, filled out brake certificate and I was right to depart. Did I tell you how magnificent it is being one of the best of the best, working for PNQ? I'm positive it won't be much longer till they sort this brake test & certificates issue out.

Depart Rocky @ 0650—some 1hr early. Good run down to Benaraby where I head into the hole. Just as I'm pulling up: "Driver 87P4 - North Coast Control." "87P4 receiving North Coast." "Yeah Driver you'll be there about 40 mins, Mail will run past and a freighter to come back then you'll get a go." "Thanks for the info control much appreciated." You always thank them when you're the best of the best—it's the PNQ way.

Into the hole at Avondale to cross another of the best of the best. Get down to Maryborough & sign off @ 1355, let SDS know availability for return is 2155, due on at 2230. Let's see: signed on 1hr 25 mins early, left Rocky 1hr early, worked extra 55mins, got there 30 mins early. Another master stroke by the best of the best in PNQ SDS. I'm in absolute awe of their abilities.

Take a wander up to the shopping centre and get some tucker, back at the luxurious 4 star motel, fairly knackered, put the snake at the door, spare blanket atop the sliding double door, and pillows along the floor of sliding door. That's better—I'm now on the dark side of the sun.

Get into bed by 1600, should get 5 hrs sleep, before I'm called. Seems to be a lot of friendly people staying in our 4 star luxury

motel today. Must know I'm trying to sleep so are assisting this by stomping up and down the stairs, talking loudly in the hallway, children running up and down the corridor, calling out to each other and their parents and of course that ever-helpful slamming of doors. Did I tell you how good it is to be one of the best of the best working for PNQ, and staying in such a high standard motel?

Geez, this bed is so comfortable, might have to get one for home. Renting at the moment though, and don't think the landlord will allow me to put a concrete slab down in the bedroom.

Hell, I must have actually fallen asleep for two secs as the next procession of friendly people are out in the hallway assisting my sleep again.

1800. Can't understand why I'm not asleep.

1930. Still not asleep, the friendly people staying in this luxury motel remain determined to assist my sleep, continuing their assistance from the hallway and stairs.

2030. Ring SDS let him know that despite the very best efforts of the lovely friendly people staying at our luxurious motel, for some reason have not been able to sleep. Advise him its best not to call me til 0000 so I might get some rest. Even the best of the best need rest.

Called exactly at midnight, by incoming driver, he's already arrived at Maryborough.

Get out to train and other driver informs me of stench from toilet. He had declined to take this loco from Brisbane but was told to, as no other loco was available. When you're the best of the best you can handle this situation with ease... Though his comments about dry retching from the smell pricked my ears up.

Got on loco, air con was on full, stomach turned inside out from raw sewerage stench. Maybe we'll turn the a/c off and open the windows... On my way, very hard to breathe normally due to stench. Remember short shallow



breaths, head out window every 30 to 60 secs and one good full breath, just make sure I'm not in a safety critical area. No, stick head right out or you'll just suck in the stench as it escapes the cab. I feel like a blonde sheila trying to remember to breathe or I'll die. Who was that said air is like sex, it's no big deal unless you can't get any...? But did I tell ya how good it is being one of the best of the best working for PNQ?

Heading thru Bundy, could do with some product, might alleviate the nauseous headache from the sewerage stench. Starting to rain. Now: would I prefer to get wet, or to close the windows and empty my stomach over the inside of the loco? No, that would make two stenches to tolerate, even a tough ask for the best of the best. Wet sounds good.

Pull up at Flinders to drain the spuds, like the old days. Hang it over the cat walk, can't get near the loo for the stench. I know— I'll wedge the vestibule door open,. Bugger that, won't work, chocks are too big. Ah wire! Proceed to tie door open to handrail, short prayer for the best of the best and off we go again.

Ah some relief at last, can actually breathe freely. Starting to rain again, reckon I'll be able to shut the windows now. I'm right now and won't get any wetter. D'oh! Soon as the windows shut, the stench builds up again. Did I tell you how lucky I am being one of the best of the best working for PNQ?

Led Zep are telling me via the CD how they're Dazed and Confused. Maybe they should come and be one of the best of the best and work for PNQ. It may just give them direction in life.

Finally back at Rocky, crook in the guts, mongrel headache, back at office and busting for a hard hit. Second thoughts, I might wait 'til I get home. Last time I sat on the office crapper I got numerous mossie bites.

P.S. did I tell you how lucky I am being one of the best of the best, working for PNQ?

REMEMBERING THE SPRINTER

By Lyndsay Bounds

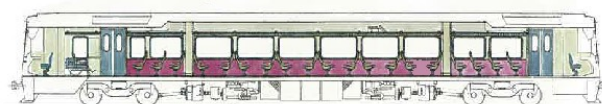


A Sprinter railcar at Albury, 1 September 1998

In 1991 it was announced that "Lightweight Diesel Railcars" were to be introduced for V/Line. In early 1992, brochures were placed around V/Line stations introducing the new railcars. At the briefing for V/Line Conductors, it was said that the railcars were to be introduced onto Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Seymour and Leongatha.

In October 1992, the Kennett Government was elected and it was announced in April 1993 that that Leongatha was to be closed. Thus a revised brochure was introduced with Leongatha deleted. Also the Kennett Government tried to cancel the order after six railcars were delivered. Because a letter of intent was signed and material had been ordered, it would have costs more to cancel the contract—thus 22 railcars were delivered. Finally, the railcars became known as Sprinters and they were introduced onto V/Line from December 1993. For years, the Sprinters ran around with Leongatha on their destination indicators. Eventually the Sprinters were introduced on a Saturday afternoon service to Sale in 1999, and from 1996 to 1998 they ran the service to Albury and the morning down from Melbourne and return service.

Sprinter



Sprinter is a Lightweight Diesel Rail Passenger Vehicle (LDRPV) designed specifically for the Public Transport Corporation. Sprinter is a high speed, energy efficient vehicle and will provide a quiet ride in air conditioned comfort – modern transport for country and outer-urban commuters.



The air conditioned saloon area is fully carpeted, featuring panoramic windows and a mixture of club style and private seating. Seats are cloth covered. Luggage space is provided in overhead racks or lockable areas at either end of the vehicle.



Special facilities are incorporated for passengers travelling in wheelchairs, they are able to use an area adjacent to the vestibule which has fold-up seats fitted. The design allows for the fitting of a public telephone facility in the vestibule area. Power operated doors (swing plug) for passenger access are provided.



Washroom and toilet facilities are designed to cater for wheelchair access, with a fold-down table provided for baby nappy-changing.



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TRAIN DRIVERS HAVE THE TOUGHEST JOB IN THE COUNTRY

By Victoria Crow of News.com.au



STRESS. It's public enemy number one - the thing we worry about more than our finances, family, future and relationships.

For most people, their jobs are the main source, and it can lead to a variety of conditions from burnout and fatigue, to anxiety, heart disease and diabetes. It also costs a fortune, with an estimated \$15 billion lost to the economy each year due to stress-related issues.

So what jobs stress us out the most?

Statistics from Safe Work Australia based on the number of accepted claims for workers compensation for mental stress-related issues show one job stands out as being particularly hard.

Train drivers have the toughest job in the country, according to the data, with 1025 claims made per 100 million hours worked - about 26 times more than the average job for males.

"For males, drivers of public transport in particular train drivers had very high rates of workers' compensation claims arising from mental stress. This is likely due to the unfortunately large number of suicides witnessed by these workers on the rail network," a Safe Work Australia spokesperson said, adding that the high incidence for males is likely because there are more men than women in the job.

For both men and women, law and order professions like police officers, security guards and paramedics were also extremely difficult, with the largest number of claims made for work related issues like general pressure, bullying and exposure to harassment and violence.

"Occupations associated with high rates of workers' compensation claims arising from mental stress tended to involve work where there are high levels of personal responsibility for the welfare of other people and where there is potential exposure to dangerous situations," the spokesperson said.

"The main point to note is in many of these occupations (both male and female) workers may have very little control over their exposure to traumatic events or aggressive or abusive people."

HIGH RISK JOBS FOR MEN:

- Train drivers and assistants
- Police, ambulance officers and paramedics
- Prison officers, welfare and community workers
- Fire fighters, bus and tram drivers
- General clerks and nursing assistants
- Special care workers and secondary school teachers
- Guards and security officers
- Primary school teachers and education managers

HIGH RISK JOBS FOR WOMEN:

- Police and prison officers
- Ambulance officers & paramedics
- Welfare, community workers and social workers
- Secondary school teachers and special education teachers
- Personal care and nursing assistants
- General clerks and customer service managers
- Vocational education teachers and education aides
- Enrolled nurses and education managers



NELSON'S COLUMN.

By Ernie Nelson V/Line Passenger Spencer Street.

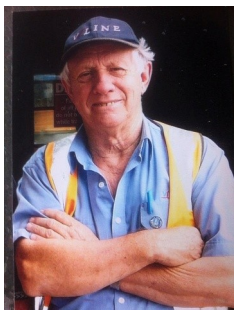
This column contains poisonous libels and vitriolic slanders, colourful language, nudity, violence, and smut of a general nature and anything else that helps sell magazines, if you don't like it hit the road mate! Email me at booze.up@myplace.come.ok or call toll free 1800 SOD ORF.

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

Vale Billy Webb

Billy Webb passed away recently, it was the mark of the man that more than 300 plus mourners packed into the Lady Nelson Room at the Westernport Marina Hastings Victoria to attend his funeral and hundreds more sent their regrets.

RIP William (Bill) Thomas Webb—train driver and great bloke. Gone but not forgotten. Missed by all.



Metro Trains, The Evil Empire

On occasion when I require to travel by Spark, it is glaringly obvious how much the fleet has been let go both in maintenance and cleanliness. It is not altogether unusual to encounter assorted rubbish on Metro trains at all hours of the day. The levels of vandalism going unrepaired is the worst I've ever known it to be and I was on the Sparks for 19 years.

Every single train has at least one unrepaired fault on it and the latest I've heard is that MTM want trains to run around at night with no headlights or whistle at line speed. I hope that one is not true as the ramification for a driver involved in an accident under those conditions would involve gaol, as Metro would throw you to the wolves.

Speaking to maintainers at Metro you get the impression that maintenance has gone from preventative to reactive. Maintenance cycles now appear to me to be stretched to the limit in the pursuit of profits by the Evil Empire.

The only good thing you can say about the Commies is that they have solved recruiting problems for other operators. I've never known it to be so bad that drivers (some still undergoing training) are actively seeking employment opportunities with other railways.

I think it is about time that MTR was given the arse and if Daniel Andrews forms government in November. I hope he does just that.

New NBN



Employment Opportunities



Just to let the boyzandgalz know there is a website called Jobrapido.com that regularly lists employment opportunities for drivers and trainees—so check it out if you're looking for a change of pace.

V/Line Expenses Debacle

V/Line management for some reason or other have decided that expense payment for short and long term relieving are optional as a payment. They have also decided that as an "improvement" drivers will no longer be able to stay private on rest jobs or when relieving long term and will not be allowed to use their private motor car to attend country depots.

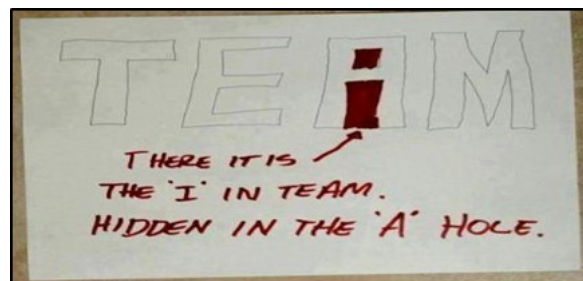
For instance: if I were to go to Traralgon from my place at Mount Martha for one day's relieving, I would be paid 76.5c per kilometre @ 324kms for a total of \$247.86. This equates to a 12 hour day for me, with 8 hour's full shift at Traralgon plus four hours driving to and from in my private car to do V/Line's bidding.

Not to be hampered by logic, the bean counters at VLP have decided that from now on if a shift cannot be covered at Traralgon then it must be covered by a Melbourne driver in eight hours from sign on to sign off—and here's where it gets farcical. In order to achieve this, the roster section has to roster two drivers from Melbourne to cover one run and either return or travel to per taxi which means a cab fare of between \$1.64 and \$1.72 per km for 160 kms. That equals \$292.32 x two (\$584.64) plus two x wages of \$854.76 for a total cost of \$1439.04—as opposed to one wage of \$427.38 + \$247.86=\$675.72 with a saving of \$763.32 and one driver released for other duties.

Another example is when a driver goes to rest, say at Albury: that person was allowed to arrange their own accommodations and be paid a private bed allowance which happened quite often. According to page 84 of the current V/Line Rail Operations Enterprise Agreement 2012-2015, this allowance (shown as A700 Driver T&I Bed) stands at \$106.60 as of 1/01/14—a not unreasonable amount given the cost of motels and hotels et al. In its infallible wisdom, however, VLP Management has decreed that this is too high a cost for them to bear so they have directed that if you go to Albury you must stay at the Quest Serviced Apartments (a fine establishment to be sure) at a cost \$150.00 per night—\$43.40 higher than the T&I Allowance.

The bean counters at VLP must be counting Mexican Jumping Beans.

There is an I in team after all



Team work is where one Tyrant forces everybody to do his bidding.

Ford, Holden and Toyota.

I was recently privy to a conversation with someone who was very highly placed at an Australian Auto Builder, who related to me the reason that Auto Builders were pulling up stumps because, with the election of a Coalition Government, there would be no assistance for for the industry. The coalition's desperation to save a mere

-on to the community: including a cost of up to 500,000 jobs plus economic loss of \$8,100,000,000.00 (every nation on earth subsidises its car builders). The car builders questioned the use of sticking around when our government is hell-bent on pursuing an ideological doctrine that has no room for the middle ground.

My source added (and this chap is a conservative by nature) that the manufacturing unions were reasonable and easy to deal with and were in no way to blame for the shutdown of the industry, despite Reich-Fuehrer Joachim von-Hockey statements to the contrary. After all the Unions agreed to wage freezes across the board to try save the industry.

I know some of you voted for the Libs and now you will reap the whirlwind by gambling with this country's future prosperity.



Media Bias

Recently in the Murdoch press we had luminaries like Peter Reith banging on about bias in Fairfax Media (which owns 3AW by the way) and the ABC (which on any reasonable scorecard is quite balanced).

The thing about Tories is this: if media reports both sides point of view then it is biased against the Tories, but if the Murdoch press backs a Lib campaign to the hilt then it is 'balanced.'

Funnily enough, they're only aiming at the middle 20% who determine how the rest of us are governed for the next 3 or 4 years depending on jurisdiction. That is to say that 45% are rusted on Conservatives with a similar number of rusted on Progressives with 10% swinging voters—win half of those plus one and you win government.

So out of 13 million voters in a federal election (Numbers are loose approximations), both main parties and their fellow travellers are virtually guaranteed 6,000,000 votes, so all advertising is aimed at the middle 1,300,000 voters all to win over at least 650,001 swinging votes in marginal seats where the swingers seem to be in higher concentrations. It is no coincidence that marginal seats always seem to have the best infrastructure and job opportunities.

It is worth noting that the ALP is more likely to form government in its own right in 95% of cases whereas the Coalition need each other at least 50% of the time, and it is funny to watch the Libs walk all over the Nats when the Libs have the numbers in their own right.

Speaking of the Nats, this parties policies are more closely aligned with Labor than the Libs as they are stated agrarian socialists after all and are pro regime ownership of important infrastructure. I think they're like symbiotic parasites who can only survive by latching on

to one of the obligate carnivores in the jungle who will tolerate their amusing antics and make their leader Deputy PM and a few of them cabinet ministers with no real say in any government decisions.

Tony Abbott's Four Steps to WorkChoices v2 December 1, 2013 Abbott Government

Tony Abbott's Government has a plan to bring back WorkChoices. But this time the Coalition has learned the lessons from the last times they had a go. There have been two previous failures – 1993 with Fightback and 2005-7 with WorkChoices.

It's a twin strategy: undermine the reputation of the union movement in the eyes of the public at the same time make their day-to-day operations as difficult as possible. While they do this, the Coalition will run a series of inquiries and reviews to lay the groundwork for WorkChoices v2.

This plan has been cooked up with corporate Australia, the likes of the Business Council of Australia, whose job it will be to do the running on the PR side of the campaign, with the willing assistance of the Murdoch press.

Can you imagine how shattered the likes of Abbott and his mates in the HR Nicholls Society were when WorkChoices was finally abolished? I can imagine them watching in horror as the magnificent uprising of union members in the Your Rights At Work campaign gathered pace across the country. No amount of wall-to-wall Government advertising selling WorkChoices could turn around public opinion.

By the end of 2007 with election day closing in, the YR@W army of union activists were everywhere and unstoppable. The Government was swept from power and a Prime Minister had lost his seat.

And even more devastating than the election result would have been seeing 25 years of work by the HR Nicholls Society pulled apart, ridiculed, reviled and comprehensively rejected by the public. We have the Mad Men of the Liberal Party's PR company to thank for encapsulating with such cynical and brilliant irony the whole agenda in just one word: WorkChoices. And we have the Howard Government to thank for the assistance they gave in the mass education of the public. The striking yellow branding of WorkChoices became hated and a symbol of giving unfettered power to employers.

In three short years, everything WorkChoices stood for became so despised in the minds of the public that even today Abbott cannot mention the word.

WorkChoices – cooked up in the eighties

WorkChoices was not something former Prime Minister John Howard dreamt up after he won the Senate in 2004. It has been a coherent agenda of the hard right amongst employers since the late eighties, but has now become mainstream for corporate Australia. In 1986, Liberal Party pups like Peter Costello and big business decided on a shared agenda to mount a war against working people and their unions and overturn the rights that generations of Australian unionists had won, so that bosses would rightfully decide EVERYTHING.

The WorkChoices agenda boils down to five things:

1. Getting rid of the idea of minimum rights and the safety-net contained in Awards and reducing the minimum wage
2. Abolishing collective bargaining via individual contracts or at least make collective bargaining as hard as possible
3. Giving employers free rein to sack people whenever they want by abolishing unfair dismissal laws.
4. Destroying the independent umpire (the Commission) so

- employers need not be accountable to outsiders
5. De-unionising the workforce by any means necessary and reducing the power of unions

This idea that employers should have all power is neatly summed up by the aims of the HR Nicholls Society:

The HR Nicholls Society believes that in a modern society there is no intrinsic imbalance in bargaining power between employers and employees and the regulation of workplace relations should be minimal.

Key Lessons Abbott and WorkChoices zealots learnt from the YR@W campaign

The WorkChoices dream has not gone away for Abbott and many others in corporate Australia. They have had six years to regroup. This is what they have learnt:

- The union movement has the organisational capacity and resources to defeat attempts to reintroduce WorkChoices. Under-estimating this capability was a fatal mistake in 2005.
- It was a mistake to go after working people's rights before taking proper account of the capacity of the union movement. Unions must be weakened first as they are the only organisations who provide effective resistance. So go after unions before you go after workers' rights.
- The electoral and political risks of introducing aspects of WorkChoices are potentially severe. The groundwork was not laid in 2005. This groundwork needs to be done by others and not the Government so as to minimise political and electoral fallout

How to upload WorkChoices v2 in four steps

Step One – Go after Unions

Despite the disgraceful behaviour of several former leaders of the HSU, Australians generally like and trust unions. A strong majority believe that the country is better off with trade unions in most studies that have been done on the topic. Australia is not like the US, where union have historically been associated with the mafia and corruption. The HSU scandal has opened up for Abbott a new front for this part of his strategy which is to find as much dirt as possible (real or imagined) to throw at unions. This is all designed to weaken the trust of the public in unions and put unions on the defensive.

This part of their strategy has already started. An inquiry is to be held into the AWU in Victoria. The Abbott Government hopes that it can both take the high moral ground and demonstrate that the HSU was not just "one bad apple." They can use the findings to justify further fishing exercises.

Alongside such "inquiries", the Abbott Government has already introduced laws to establish the Registered Organisations Commission to permanently oversee the internal operations of all unions. We have seen this before, when such bodies like the ABCC (which the government is restoring with extended powers to also cover the maritime industry), have been given a huge budget and lots of staff and told to dig for every bit of dirt they can find. These laws are meant to reflect laws governing corporations with huge fines and the possibility of criminal charges.

The big difference between corporations and unions is that 90% of the union officials

concerned are not paid anything. They are workers who have other jobs like disability workers, truck drivers, teachers, nurses, factory workers. They stand for election and receive little benefit other than the respect of their members and the honour of leading their union. They are nothing like company directors who are often high flyers, with plenty of resources to back them up. Even employer groups have slammed the proposed legislation as being unworkable and too tough.

The purpose of these laws is to make life hell for all unions. Auditors could be sent into union offices around the country to trawl through every receipt and every transaction, looking for anything that can be fed to the Murdoch press and to give Abbott and his attack dogs ammunition in a new publicity war. After all, negative campaigning is their forte: throw enough mud and some will stick.

The aim here is to distract unions, tie resources up in petty compliance and red tape, and have the whole movement on the defensive. But the bigger prize is to try and weaken the public's trust in the union movement—so that mounting a campaign such as the YR@W campaign will be much harder for them.

Step 2 – Make business run the campaign

About a year ago, confident of a Coalition win at the election, the Business Council of Australia became organised. Since then, we have seen a chorus of CEOs lining up to push the WorkChoices agenda. Here's some of the line-up:

- Russell Zimmerman Director of the Retail Traders Association on reducing penalty rates
- George Calombaris, celebrity chef on abolishing weekend and public holiday penalty rates
- Bernie Brookes, CEO Myers on penalty rates
- Catriona Noble, McDonald's CEO on penalty rates
- BHP on taking away rights for workers who are bullied
- David Peever, Rio Tinto CEO on limiting collective bargaining rights
- Peter Strong, CEO Council of Small Business on abolishing award rights and individual contracts
- Maurice Newman, Chair of the PMs Business Advisory Council on the minimum wage being too high
- Gerry Harvey, Chairman of Harvey Norman on abolishing
- Sunday penalty rates

They are campaigning. They have a theme. It's not called WorkChoices. It's not about taking away rights (yet), it is all about jobs and "productivity." Get ready for the show they will put on in 2014.

Step 3 – Use Inquiries and Reviews to hide behind.

Back in the eighties, the trend towards hiring consultants to do your dirty work also started. Workers have all seen how it goes – pay a consultant lots of money to write a report or conduct a review that says everything that the boss wants but doesn't dare propose himself. This gives the impression of outside legitimacy and authority. You get to stand at arm's length. It's a tried and true trick to minimise fallout for decisions. A massive industry has now grown up around it.

All governments now use this trick, but it's a real favourite with coalition governments – just look at the audits conducted by State governments and Abbott's "Commission of Audit". The appeal of such audits for a coalition government is that their consultants share the same neo-liberal ideology. Abbott has shown no shame whatsoever with his own selections for the Commission of Audit, which is to be headed up by the very people who will gain financially from recommendations that involve privatisation – the



Business Council of Australia. Talk about putting Dracula in charge of the blood bank!

The centrepiece of Coalition IR policy is the full review of the whole Fair Work Act conducted by none other than the Productivity Commission. This will be nothing but a singing and dancing show for employers and the Murdoch press to lay the ground-work for WorkChoices v2. The outcome of this inquiry is pretty much pre-determined; the head of the commission has made his views on workers' rights and productivity clear. I reckon I could write the report now and save them heaps of money... But that's not the point (see Step 2 above).

The second big review due early next year is a full review of all awards. Remember, a key part of the WorkChoices agenda is to take rights out of awards so wages and conditions have the potential to fall a long way before they reach a threadbare safety-net. Employers have already signalled a full scale assault on one part of take-home pay: penalty rates (see the quotes above).

Step 4 – Hide behind the new ultra right-wing senate

For a long time now, we have seen the "balance of power" in the senate held by parties of the centre or the Left, such as the Greens or the Democrats. They have often insisted on amendments to legislation in exchange for support but such changes have usually not been to the detriment of workers.

A whole new world of senate politics awaits us come 1 July 2014 and it will be a horror show for working people. Bob Day, the new Families First senator from SA was once on the Board of the HR Nicholls Society and wants to implement their agenda. The NSW Liberal Democrat David Leyonhjelm, elected because his party was drawn first on the ballot paper, doesn't even believe in the minimum wage.

On top of this is the Palmer United Party, a billionaire's party. He hasn't bothered to spend his money to get this influence in Parliament so he can support workers' rights, that's for sure. And Nick Xenophon opposes penalty rates too.

This new senate provides great opportunities for Abbott to do more than he promised and more than he might have dreamt of in his first term of government. And, he doesn't have to make these proposals himself. After business have run their campaigns and the various inquiries have delivered him what business wants, he can use the new senate to finish the job.

Clear Strategy

I think Abbott's strategy is clear for all to see if you follow what he and other WorkChoices devotees are up to. Knowing or predicting your opponents' strategy is vitally important to building your own. I hope to talk about this in the next instalment.

LABOR UNIONS:
THE FOLKS WHO BROUGHT YOU THE WEEKEND.
CHILD LABOR LAWS, OVERTIME,
MINIMUM WAGE, INJURY PROTECTION,
WORKMENS COMPENSATION INSURANCE,
PENSION SECURITY, RIGHT TO ORGANIZE . ETC.

It's Every Driver's Mago. Remember it's your Mago too so write in on any relevant subject you like.
Seeya later, Drive

Letters from Lance Adams Retired Driver late of Hurstbridge



and Seymour forwarded to me from Michael Hinch, VLP Driver.

Here is an image of a 600 HP Tulloch car in the Yea-Tallarook section in Feb 77. The ganger standing in the image, conducting sleeper boring, is Yea ganger Len Orth (still residing in Yea, not far from me).

Enjoy

LANCE ADAMS

I had been rostered on yet another Colbinabbin adventure, went to Colbinabbin with a single engine, a "T" class diesel loco, grabbed a double load and headed back towards Erwen and the 107 dividing board. Being a dry day about 40 degrees, I decided to see how far I could get up the Erwen bank before stalling. A counter meal and a refreshing cool drink, instead of returning for the rear portion, was certainly tempting. All went well and I managed to get the whole train over the Erwen bank and that's where I came unstuck.

As you enter the Rushworth yard, there is a very steep decline of the line, between 2 level crossings, and it is impossible to stop on that downgrade with a double load of GY's even at a track speed of 20 MPH. The only thing that will pull you up, is the slight leveling of the line, into the Rushworth yard. I topped the grade OK, had a good hold of the train, and was descending the grade "floating" along nicely with the brakes hard on with an equalizing application, when I noticed the facing points sticking open, with no lock bar applied, I called to my fireman, Michael McAsey from Yea, my regular offsider, to get on the floor. I threw the handle of the A6 (A type of Automatic Air Brake for our younger members) into emergency, and dived onto the floor with Michael. What a ride, trucks were going everywhere. It took 3 days to clear up the carnage. When the "Yellow" brake down truck eventually arrived from Seymour it was accompanied by Clarry Cook, who took one look at the train, realising that I had more vehicles than I should have, and asked where I got this train, I replied "Colbinabbin" and he turned away. All correspondence after that made reference to a fictitious second "T" Class engine that wasn't there. A double load, with multiple units was not going to pose a problem on paper. It is impossible, to come to a stand on that downgrade, between the two level crossings.

I had another incident, some time later, on the same downgrade, involving a double load ex Colbinabbin, hauled by a single Loco, when a funeral procession decided to come to a complete stop, on the second crossing, to merge with a main road, at a T intersection, outside the post office, and I went through the whole lot—hearse and all. Clarry again eventually appeared on the scene, took one look at me and the train involved, and immediately had a fictitious 2nd engine allocated. No serious injuries on this one, and nothing more heard of the incident. I had my same regular fireman as the last time and in the future I always divided double loads at the 107 peg after that. I never had any future incidents at this location.

The first time I went out to Rushworth, there were up and down Home Signals provided, and plunger locking, with parallel running lines on the down end to the junction of the Colbinabbin and Girgarre lines. This setup was abolished, hand lockbars provided, the yard rationalized, The SM moved into an office in the goods' shed, station building demolished, with Wheat Silos constructed on the old No1 Road platform site. The junction was converted to a set of WSA Points, (parallel running lines removed) not locked, operated by the Fireman to each destination as circumstances demanded. The two terminals were both operated by the one Train Staff

Only, with only one Train allowed on either branch, at any one time. No staff tickets could be issued. In the original setup, there was a separate token for each line, and ticket working was available. There is a large footbridge across the Rushworth yard, which fouled the roof ventilators of a passenger set, that was present on my first visit. The footbridge was consequently demolished by this collision, and was consequently rebuilt. It was probably many years since passenger trains were on the line, yet alone air conditioned S Cars. The collision took the ventilators clean off.

Little remains of the Rushworth yard now, except a small length of track at the down end, the same piece of track that I used to leave our engine on, whilst we indulged in lunch and refreshments. It is the remains of the road/roundabout, where I ploughed through the funeral procession. Talk about run over a dead dog, and half kill it!

Regards

LANCE ADAMS



I am forwarding you an image that was sent to me By Weston Langford, A noted railway historian, and former VR and ETRB Civil Engineer. It is a snap of regular Yea Resident J 514 rounding a corner near the Dairy Creek Crossing, around the 69.20 mark, with a down Saturday morning, Talarook-Yea switch trip. Gone, but not forgotten!

Enjoy

LANCE ADAMS

I am about to scribe something that has never been put down on paper before, but I think it should be recorded for posterity sake, and I hope through your pages, that this might happen. Time will tell if we have been successful through the years or not, with this challenge. This topic is the history of the Railmotor Division. What I am about to put down on paper, is the result of observations and personal experiences in the division over a number of years.

Things appeared to have got started with the arrival of the motor car, with many early limousines converted to run where and when required across the network, by the rich and famous, as personal, chauffeur driven transport, away from regular timetabled restrictions. Being able to go where you liked, when you liked, was quite a new experience. Good and reliable roads around the new colony of Victoria, were virtually non existent. With the arrival of the AEC and LEYLAND Double ended cars the division was expanded to incorporate regular reduced costs, regular branch line services. By this time the division had grown into a respectable size, autonomous to the Locomotive Division (With animosity)

With the arrival of the first of the Walker Cars, 102HP and 153HP units, in 1949, a sudden influx of manpower was required for these new cars. A sudden great recruitment drive commenced, with new recruits, mostly ex the traffic branch staff, were obtained. The first of the recruits became the drivers, and in seniority order, the remainder became Rail motor Second Men, to act as required in the driving grade or be utilized and to be appointed to the position in Seniority order. At the time, manpower was short after the 2nd World War, and the Victorian Railways didn't want to place qualified valuable Locomotive Enginemen (which they were short of) on these new units, which they would have to retrain anyway, for these new operations. The 280HP Main line units arrived in 1951, and this line of thinking continued.

In the late 1950's this line of succession ceased, and staffing levels had got to an unworkable low level. By 1972, with the no training having taken place for some time, it was decided by the SLR of the time, to move qualified Locomotive drivers into the vacant positions for training, in line with other

rolling stock, driving grade requirements. They would run 1 class of 8 each year—and they would not have to teach us safeworking, as we were already qualified. Just having to train us in the various cars and their daily maintenance including A and B examinations and brake blocking as required. I was in the second group to be conscripted over there. We were treated like lepers over there, as we were on full loco driver's pay over there, while the 40 year veterans were paid a rate between a fireman and a guard for the same job. The loco drivers did not want to know us, as they considered us turncoats and traitors and driving second rate units, rather than a real mans train. In addition when our rostered run, was converted to a locomotive hauled train, we were allocated a fireman, and told to "go drive it" where the regular railmotor drivers (not a qualified as a locomotive driver) would have to operate as a guard on the train. When there was a train to be run utilizing 2 drivers, the qualified locomotive man had to drive, regardless of seniority. This caused a lot of animosity amongst the ranks. We were absolutely detested by the regulars over there, yet we had no say in being there or had any input to policy. For a great number of years we were conscripted there to drive, but were not considered eligible to apply for regular positions, until all the rail motor secondmen had been appointed to driving appointments. This all changed with a Job advertised at Cobram. A Seymour locomotive driver qualified in railmotors, who used to do the regular reliefs at Heathcote for years, Joe Beizer (now deceased) was the successful applicant for the position. As no other railmotor only men had applied for the position, they had to award the job to Joe. This opened the floodgates for our people to get these positions, and we have been there, ever since. The animosity ceased, in the early 80's when a successful appeal to the arbitration commission by the AFULE, saw railmotor drivers pay elevated to that of fully qualified locomotive drivers, then it was all Buddy, Mate, Good Bloke. A real change of attitude. Particularly when the majority of the men were nearing retirement age, and they were going to see a sudden rise in there superannuation benefits.

In the early years, rostering was difficult, with only a select few could drive both types of equipment, but local rostering up the bush, meant that it was easier to keep track of who was where. Cohuna is a good example of this, as when they had a relieving locomotive driver qualified in railmotors, they would roster a loco driver qualified in railmotors on the Mon, Wed and Friday down goods, to change over with the up morning railmotor ex-Cohuna. The goods would return Tuesday, Thursday and Friday against the down railmotor. As flexibility improved, so did rostering, particularly up the bush.

Sorry about all this, but it had to be written down and known.

LANCE ADAMS ; Yea 11/02/2014



I thought you might like to receive this classic pose of R 704 at Prairie on the up Swan Hill Passenger service in April 1964. Driver Jimmy Grinter ex Kerang, retired as DIC Echuca circa 1980. He was great at drinking beer with the boys. The regular Kerang permanent Fireman was Jimmy Greaves. He transferred to Bairnsdale, where he retired around 1980 Too. Another good beer drinking man.

Enjoy

LANCE ADAMS

Thank you for the advice of Billy Webb. Bill fired at Seymour for Harold Schumann around the same time as Clarry Cook. Before ending up at Crib Point, he was a railmotor driver at Cohuna and Spencer Street. He was a well known favourite of the female of the species. His favourite trick was to walk through the railmotor, handing out long stem roses to all the ladies present on Valentine's day.

A big hit all round! Gone but not forgotten!

LANCE ADAMS : Yea: January 2014

ARE YOU COVERED?

AGAINST SICKNESS OR AN ACCIDENT
SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR ALL VIC: RTBU: RAIL EMPLOYEES

OPTION: 1

THREE LEVELS OF COVER AVAILABLE

AGE GROUP: 16 to 59 SICKNESS & ACCIDENT
7 Days Waiting Period & 104 Weeks Benefit Period
\$16.00 Fortnightly PREMIUM = \$200 Weekly BENEFIT
\$17.60 Fortnightly PREMIUM = \$250 Weekly BENEFIT
\$23.62 Fortnightly PREMIUM = \$300 Weekly BENEFIT

GROUP Policy No: 5105228

THREE LEVELS OF COVER AVAILABLE

AGE GROUP: 60 to 68 ACCIDENT ONLY
14 Days Waiting Period & 52 Weeks Benefit Period
\$11.92 Fortnightly PREMIUM = \$200 Weekly BENEFIT
\$12.64 Fortnightly PREMIUM = \$250 Weekly BENEFIT
\$17.20 Fortnightly PREMIUM = \$300 Weekly BENEFIT

- ❖ **PLUS: \$10,000** ACCIDENTAL DEATH BENEFIT, AT NO EXTRA COST (AUTOMATICALLY INCLUDES YOUR SPOUSE)
- ❖ **PLUS: \$5,000** FUNERAL BENEFIT, (ACCIDENTAL DEATH) AT NO EXTRA COST (THIS BENEFIT ONLY APPLIES FOR MEMBER)
- ❖ AUTOMATIC ACCEPTANCE, NO MEDICALS REQUIRED
- ❖ EASY METHOD OF PAYMENT VIA PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS
- ❖ 7 DAYS WAITING PERIOD
- ❖ 104 WEEKS BENEFIT PERIOD
- ❖ PREMIUMS DO NOT INCREASE WITH AGE
- ❖ **POST TRAUMATIC STRESS:** ONLY APPLIES IF CONDITION IS A RESULT OF A FATALITY OR NEAR FATALITY, WHILST THE DRIVER IS DRIVING A TRAIN
 - AGE Group: 16 to 59 7 Days Waiting Period
 - AGE Group: 60 to 64 14 Days Waiting Period
 - AGE Group: 65 to 69 28 Days Waiting Period
- ❖ 24 HOUR WORLD-WIDE COVER
- ❖ PREMIUMS TAX DEDUCTIBLE
- ❖ 26 Weeks Benefit Period
- ❖ 26 Weeks Benefit Period
- ❖ 26 Weeks Benefit Period
- ❖ PAID IN ADDITION TO SICK LEAVE & WORKERS COMPENSATION (UP TO 100% GROSS YEARLY INCOME)
- ❖ SAME RATES: FOR ALL EMPLOYEES AND WHETHER A SMOKER OR NON-SMOKER
- ACCIDENT ONLY COVER APPLIES FROM AGE 60 (REDUCED PREMIUMS APPLY) ALL COVER CEASES AGE 70
- EXCLUSION: ALL PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS PLEASE READ PDS FOR ALL EXCLUSIONS

OPTION: 2

AFA: INDIVIDUAL POLICY

VARIOUS LEVELS OF COVER

\$26.80 Fortnightly PREMIUM = \$500 Weekly BENEFIT
\$32.16 Fortnightly PREMIUM = \$600 Weekly BENEFIT
\$37.52 Fortnightly PREMIUM = \$700 Weekly BENEFIT
\$42.88 Fortnightly PREMIUM = \$800 Weekly BENEFIT

7 DAYS WAITING PERIOD

\$48.24 Fortnightly PREMIUM = \$900 Weekly BENEFIT
\$53.60 Fortnightly PREMIUM = \$1000 Weekly BENEFIT
\$64.32 Fortnightly PREMIUM = \$1200 Weekly BENEFIT
\$80.40 Fortnightly PREMIUM = \$1500 Weekly BENEFIT

- **PLUS: \$25,000** ACCIDENTAL DEATH AND **\$5,000** FUNERAL BENEFIT, AT NO EXTRA COST
- 7 DAYS WAITING PERIOD
- 104 WEEKS BENEFIT PERIOD
- PREMIUMS TAX DEDUCTIBLE
- NO MEDICALS REQUIRED
- EASY METHOD OF PAYMENT VIA PAYROLL DEDUCTIONS
- 24 HOUR, WORLD-WIDE COVER
- PREMIUMS DO NOT INCREASE WITH AGE
- PAID IN ADDITION TO SICK PAY - UP TO 90% OF YOUR GROSS YEARLY INCOME
- SAME RATES: FOR ALL EMPLOYEES AND WHETHER A SMOKER OR NON-SMOKER
- 14 DAYS WAIT AND 52 WEEKS BENEFIT APPLIES WHEN YOU REACH 60 YEARS OF AGE
- ACCIDENT ONLY COVER APPLIES FROM AGE 65 (PREMIUMS ARE REDUCED TO 50%) ALL COVER CEASES AGE 70
- EXCLUSIONS: WORKERS COMPENSATION AND ALL PRE-EXISTING CONDITION

Ref:F:UO:2014

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Where is it?

with Trevor Penn and Des Jowett
edited by Warren Banfield



THE previous *Where Is It ...?* [below right] was at Graham, on the former Port Melbourne railway line.

The winners were William Jackson and Rob Hulands from Flinders Street.

Meanwhile if you think you know the location of the photograph on the *opposite* page, call the Union Office on 9907 9800 or toll free on 1800 134 095. f 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!

The following items contain some extremely hard core, xxxx rated gunzelling material. Sensitive folk are warned they should skip the next few pages, or continue reading at their own peril.

The location [right] is Graham, the penultimate station on the Port Melbourne line. A pair of shunters decorates the front platform of Y125 as it enters Port Melbourne Yard on a switch trip from Montague, circa 1966. These local moves were performed without a brakevan in the rear and it was a common, though unofficial, practice for the Leading Shunter to chalk a white circle on the rear of the last truck to denote the rake was complete.

The impressive signal box opened as Graham Street with 25 levers on 17 September 1883, some six years before the provision of a passenger station to serve the locality, but both station and signal box were renamed Graham on 1 May 1909 in consequence of

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

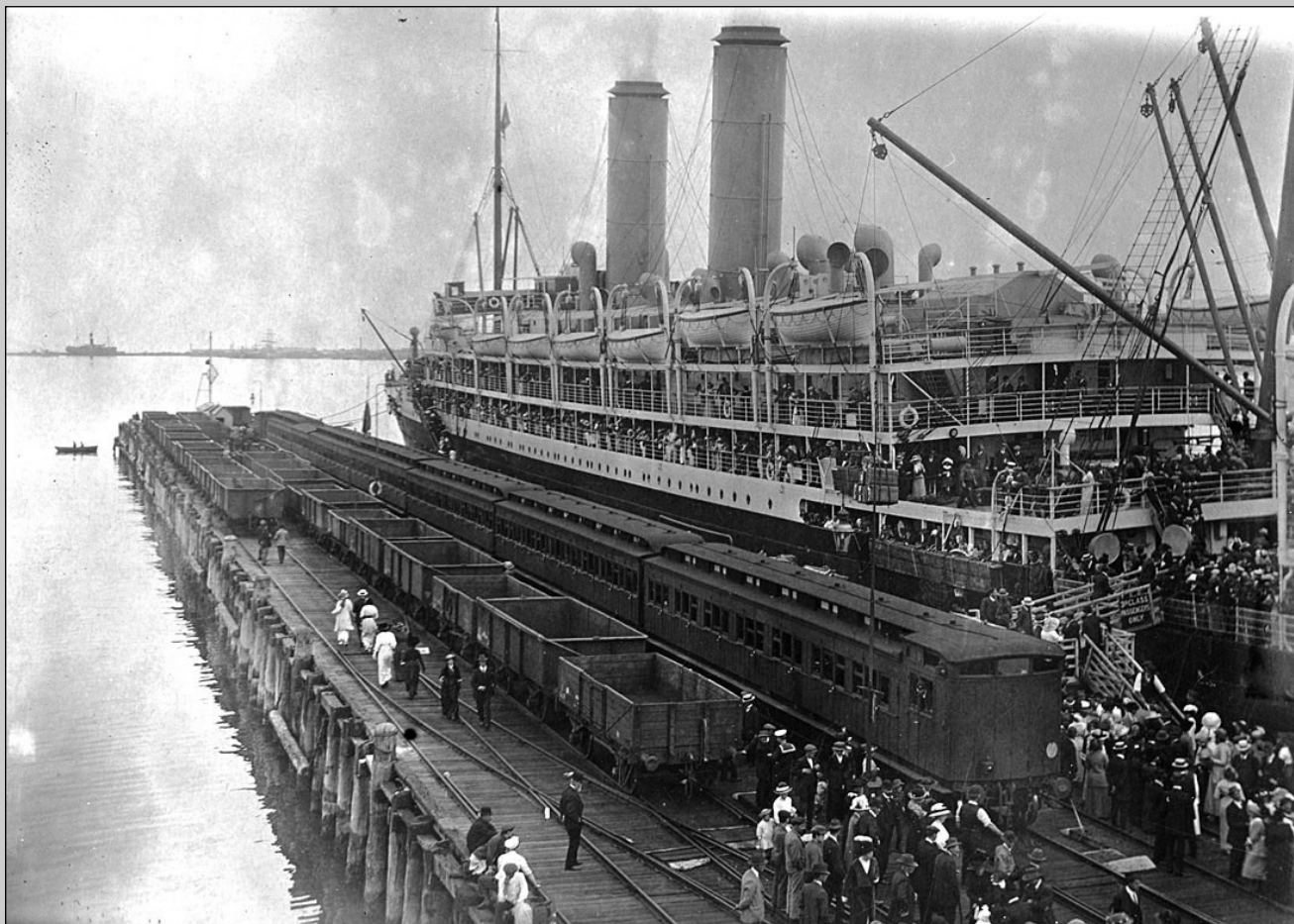


The navigation beacons or “Leading Lights” were erected in the area between Prince’s and Railway Piers to mark the approach to Port Melbourne in 1924, which helps to date this view depicting large ships diverted to the former, during the protracted rebuilding of the latter into Station Pier in the period 1921–30.

The Railway Pier, shown here cut back to the Bay Excursion wings and with its decking removed, had a distinct right-hand bend halfway along its length, and it seems this was to bring the outer end into alignment with the older Town Pier, located off the end of Bay Street. A major function of Town Pier at this time was the transshipping of coal from the Illawarra or Hunter regions of

New South Wales. From here a narrow gauge horse powered tramway conveyed it through the streets to the large South Melbourne Gasworks, which festered away on either side of Pickles Street. The larger of the two gasholders visible in the photo was the second one on the site, the original having disintegrated in a spectacular fireball brought about by corrosion and faulty design, on 4th April 1920. The flames were visible from Hurstbridge and the bang was heard as far away as Rosebud!

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE PHOTO; PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN



And now for the Shipping News... In a busy scene at the narrow and antiquated Port Melbourne Railway Pier, First and Second class passengers are boarding an ocean-going steamship by means of a gangplank adjacent to the bridge, well segregated from the Third Class riff-raff seen marching up a kind of sheep race to the afterdeck.

Although no name is visible she is thought to be either RMS *Orvieto* (Royal Mail Steamer) commissioned in 1909, or RMS *Orama* of 1911. These, along with four sister ships, were built for the Orient Line's service between England and Australia and all had names starting with "O". Contemporary vessels of the White Star Line had names ending in "ic" as in *Majestic*, *Olympic* and *Titanic*, while the mighty Cunard Line used an "ia" suffix for its fleet: *Aquitania*, *Mauretania* and *Lusitania* being well known examples.

Orama had a tragically short career, being taken over by the British Admiralty on the outbreak of the "War To End All Wars", and equipped with four 4.7 inch guns, in the process becoming an Armed Merchant Cruiser. At 5.50 in the afternoon of 19th October 1917, in company with eight United States Destroyers, she was escorting a convoy when Kapitänleutnant Ernst Hashagen of submarine U62 fired a torpedo that struck *Orama* on the port side. She went down very slowly (with minimal casualties, one hopes) while the USS *Conyham* tried unsuccessfully to ram the offending U boat.

Orvieto was more fortunate. Having completed a voyage from England just after war was declared, she was requisitioned by the Commonwealth Government and refitted as troop ship A3, HMAT *Orvieto* (His Majesty's Australian Transport). In this guise she sailed from Railway Pier on 21 October 1914 conveying the 1st Light Horse Brigade and the 2nd Infantry Brigade to Suez, en route to deployment at Gallipoli. Later war service as HMS *Orvieto* saw her utilised as an AMC and minelayer, before resuming her civilian role on the Australian mail run in 1919. She was never converted to oil burning and the "Black Gang" in the boiler rooms continued to shovel their way across the ocean until her final voyage in 1930. Her bell, inscribed S.S. ORVIETO BELFAST, survives in the playground of a primary school in Stirling, Scotland, some 30 km from Bo'ness, where she was scrapped in 1931.

Therefore this view could not have been taken before 1909, while the appearance of the ladies in the photo would suggest a date around 1913-14; a time when women's fashions evolved from lacy outfits with big floral hats to a far more severe look that persisted until well after the end of the Great War.

This photo is reproduced courtesy of Mark Bau's victorianrailways.net website and with thanks to Eddie Cole, Spencer Street's resident shipping expert, for the nautical stuff.

PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

VR Chairman Thomas Tait's quirky policy of shortening station names.

The rails in the foreground formed part of the short branch to Prince's Pier, the opening of which on 22 May 1916 required the extension of the signal frame to 65 levers and the provision of a second set of interlocked gates. Known initially as the New Pier, it was renamed to commemorate the 1920 Australian visit of His Royal Highness, Edward, Prince of Wales. This rather shallow

and populist character preferred the charms of Mrs Wallis Simpson to the responsibilities of office, and abdicated the British throne on 11th December 1936 after an 11 month stint as King Edward VIII, being known thereafter as The Duke of Windsor. (The Prince's Highway in Victoria, NSW and South Australia was also named in his honour.)

Weekly Notice 45 of 1919 announced that the 1,500 volt overhead was alive from Flinders Street to the Bay Excursion Pier as well as on the New Pier line. This

resulted in the abolition of the sprawling Port Melbourne Locomotive Depot, which once occupied the area bounded by Graham Street, Prince's Street and Waterfront Place, and was known as "The Blue Hen's Nest" from the distinctive blue caps worn by the local Enginemmen.

The Bay Excursion Pier actually comprised a pair of short wings protruding from either side of what was later known as Station Pier, and these served as nautical "dock platforms" for the magnificent paddle steamers that plied on a daily basis to Queenscliff and Sorrento.

The largest of these, the celebrated *Hygeia*, was named for the ancient Greek Goddess of Health, and could accommodate over 1,600 passengers.

During trials in 1890 she recorded an astonishing maximum speed of 20 knots though she is said to have averaged around 16 knots in normal service, when economy was paramount. No doubt the captain was instructed to save the coal! It must have been a magical experience to sail "Down the Bay" on one these Huddart Parker owned ships, the music of a string band competing with the urgent thump, thump, thump of the paddle wheels as *Hygeia*, *Weeroona* or *Ozone* steamed

proudly along the West Channel, with a long trail of smoke marking their passage.

With a "Fast Electric Train" every ten minutes throughout the day, passenger business thrived on the main line. The Working Time Tables, ancestors of the Master Train Plan, showed one of the double-ended "dogbox" Motor coaches, known as ABMs, running to Prince's Pier "As Required" which suggests a low level of traffic.

However—pause for effect—during the twenties, owing to the protracted reconstruction of the rickety old Railway Pier into Station Pier, all large ships had to be diverted across to Prince's Pier, as shown in the first aerial photo. As road access was both poor and indirect (no Centenary Bridge back then) traffic must have boomed on the new line at least for a few years, and especially when one or more liners were in port. These surely required the operation of full length Sparks. With the rebuilding completed, and the Depression starting to bite, the Prince's Pier service was discontinued from November 1930.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35



Until the late 1930s the VR tended to paint their rolling stock and infrastructure in Fifty Shades Of Brown, but that began to change as the effects of the Depression eased a little and things became more colourful at the same time as many services were improved.

A striking example of these changes was this refurbished six-car Tait set that began running on 17th March 1936. A publicity booklet entitled "Achievement" described it thus:

"Light blue, with a silver roof [and crimson roof letters], are the colours giving a special significance to 'The Boat Train'. This train, which consists of the suburban passenger stock, runs between Flinders Street and the Station Pier, Port Melbourne, on the occasion of the arrival and departure of overseas

passenger vessels. At night, it is floodlit – the only train in Australia to be distinguished in this manner."

The roof actually looks white in this view taken in Jolimont Yard, but who are we to argue? Whatever the real shade was, it must have been a tricky job keeping it clear of the grease and goo sprayed from the pans of the GE cross-arm pantographs.

One wonders if this eye catching PR exercise was captured on Kodachrome by some filthy rich American tourist, and the results lie hidden away to this day in a dusty attic in Dallas or Pasadena? Sadly, the service was destined to be short-lived and finished up in October 1939, being an early victim of World War II.

P.R.O. PHOTO; PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN



It may be a cliché but sometimes a picture really is worth a thousand words. A great example is this view of the Port Melbourne area taken on a peaceful post war Sunday, 28th February 1948. Uncle Sam built things on a grand scale, and the eight impressively large iron sheds or warehouses that made up the Portstore complex are very obvious. The terminal buffer stop can be seen opposite the swampy ground in the right foreground and the course of the line, laid mostly as double track and incorporating a pair of delta or scissors crossovers, is easy to trace.

The full picture titled "State Bank Houses" (and you'd really think of searching under THAT heading!) can be downloaded from the State Library website. The dwellings in question, dating from the late 1930s, made up the mini suburb of Garden City and were largely financed by (you guessed it!) The State Savings Bank of Victoria. One wonders how the residents of this little utopia felt when their lovely view disappeared?

The Yanks have taken their bat and ball and gone home, and the only signs that the line is still being used are a handful of wagons at the middle shed which backs onto Beacon Road. Perhaps this was leased out to some firm for storage? Des Jowett, firing a D³ loco on a Port Melbourne Pilot, ventured out to place trucks there in 1956, although the Weekly Notice tells us the junction points had been spiked out of use in the previous year!

On 23 November 1970 an Act was passed by the State Parliament authorising construction of "The River Entrance Docks Railway." From a junction with the Prince's Pier line near Swallow Street, it would have used part of the old Portstore branch alignment to the north of the Beacon Tower before continuing straight ahead along (the centre reservation of?) Howe Parade. It would have then crossed Williamstown Road and the present Todd Road to enter the precinct of what became known as Webb Dock.

With a total length of a mere 86 chains (less than 2 km) and located well away from the sea front, this line if constructed as

planned could have been the salvation of the Flinders Street to Port Melbourne railway.

"Not In My Back Yard!" howled the good folk of Port Melbourne and Garden City. And verily it came to pass that the NIMBYs had their way, and the Act was amended by John Cain's incoming Labor Government in December 1982.

A much more ambitious line was then built from the Melbourne Yard.

Passing through the present Docklands Park it then climbed at 1 in 50 to span the Yarra beside the Charles Grimes Bridge, utilising what became the pedestrian-cycle way known as "Webb Bridge." Descending at 1 in 63 the railway levelled out to run beside Lorimer Street and Westgate Park.

The main line, worked under Train Staff rules (without tickets), and with a track speed of 25 km/h off a "Low Speed Caution" signal, ended just south of the Park in a three-road yard, complete with a brick shunters' cabin that was never used and soon fell prey to vandals. From the Webb Dock Marshalling Yard a single track passed through a security gate to serve three sidings in the Australian National Line terminal area. These sidings, along with the track on the river bridge, were optimistically laid in dual gauge.

Opened with fanfare on 3rd December 1986, the then Shunters' Section of the Australian Railways Union ensured that no "through" freight trains ever reached Webb Dock and, served only by sporadic switch trips from the Canal Yard, this expensive railway fell into disuse during Jeff Kennett's "slash and burn" era of the nineties, becoming one of Victoria's many transport tragedies.

Although the Port of Melbourne Authority and ARTC have plans to "reconnect" Webb Dock by means of a low level rail bridge alongside the Bolte Bridge, it's a safe bet that the boating fraternity and the Yuppies of Docklands will never allow such a thing to spoil their aquatic playground.

PHOTO COURTESY STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 33

Things picked up a bit in 1942, when a branch off the branch was constructed on the Down side of the Swallow Street hand gates and passed to the east of the Beacon Tower before swinging hard right to run parallel with Beacon Road. It then went left along the Garden City foreshore to terminate near the edge of the present day Webb Dock area, where a buffer stop was erected at a distance of 3 miles – 21 chains – 91 links from Flinders Street, and just over a mile from the junction points. Opened in 1942, this line served a United States military establishment known as Portstore. The late Roy McDuff, then firing at North Melbourne Loco, was working on one of the ubiquitous A² class ten-wheelers which formed the backbone of the VR's mainline fleet, when an American sailor on sentry duty declared in a condescending tone that, "I see yer switchers are kinda small ... what are yer passenger engines like?" and Roy was forced to admit these WERE the passenger engines!

The Portstore line would have seen little traffic after "VP Day" in 1945 although ten years elapsed before the junction points were spiked out of use and the rails, corroding in the salty air, together with a lonely buffer stop, were still in place along the seaward side of The Boulevard in the late sixties.

Bit by bit, many of the remaining facilities disappeared. In 1953 the long disused overhead on the Prince's Pier line was dismantled, except for the section visible in the photo which was extended two hundred yards or so into Port Melbourne Yard. This enabled the nice new L class electric locos, having arrived light engine from North Melbourne (or South Dynon from 1962), to run Up trains ex Port Melbourne notably the evening "Sirex." This conveyed empty wagons collected by one of the local

Pilots from the nearby Bridge Street Yard and was destined for timber loading on the Orbost line.

The Double Line Block Telegraph section from Graham to Port Melbourne "B" Box at Prince's Pier was singled from 12 March 1961 and the Box abolished, though one wonders how it had lasted so long. Next to go on 15th July 1966 was the Up line between Graham and Port Melbourne, along with the Safeworking functions of "A" Box, situated across the track from the upmarket eatery that now occupies the brick station building.

The installation of a panel at Graham station brought about the end of the mechanical signalling on 14 December 1969, when the Box was closed and the crossing gates were converted to hand operation while the Graham Street overpass was constructed alongside; a job that took over a year to complete.

After all that rationalisation things settled down until October 1987, when a short-sighted political decision resulted in the cessation of passenger trains after 133 years of service, followed soon after by the remaining freight traffic.

Instead of a seven minute ride from Flinders Street by "Fast Electric Train," Yarra Trams customers can now savour the delights of a slow and crowded trip on a rough riding articulated vehicle as it lurches its way along Bourke, Spencer and Clarendon Streets en route to Port Junction where it enters the alignment of Australia's very first steam railway. Some call it progress...

What do you think?

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



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NIGHT-RIDING A "SPARK": INTRODUCTION

We thought our readers might enjoy another essay by Richard Hughes, journalist and editor of the *Victorian Railways Magazine*, written under the byline of C. H. Cheong.

There is a small inaccuracy, wherein he mentions a whistle cord, which is actually the "knob" depicted above the Driver's left arm in Angus Mac's evocative drawing, operating the brass "flute" whistle as found on contemporary EMUs. Note that 1105 dropped onto its train at Flinders Street and upon returning left it in Jolimont Yard; the likely explanation being a lack of overhead wiring in the Melbourne Yard at this stage.

The "Observer" was lower down the food chain than a "real" Fireman and received a lower rate of pay. In the early seventies a firing job on an E class (as these little beasts were officially known from 1955) appeared on your "butcher's paper" pay slip as "Electric Loco Assistant"

and was rated at a few cents less per hour than a normal job. Hence a requirement for the Driver to show the engine class and number on his timesheet!

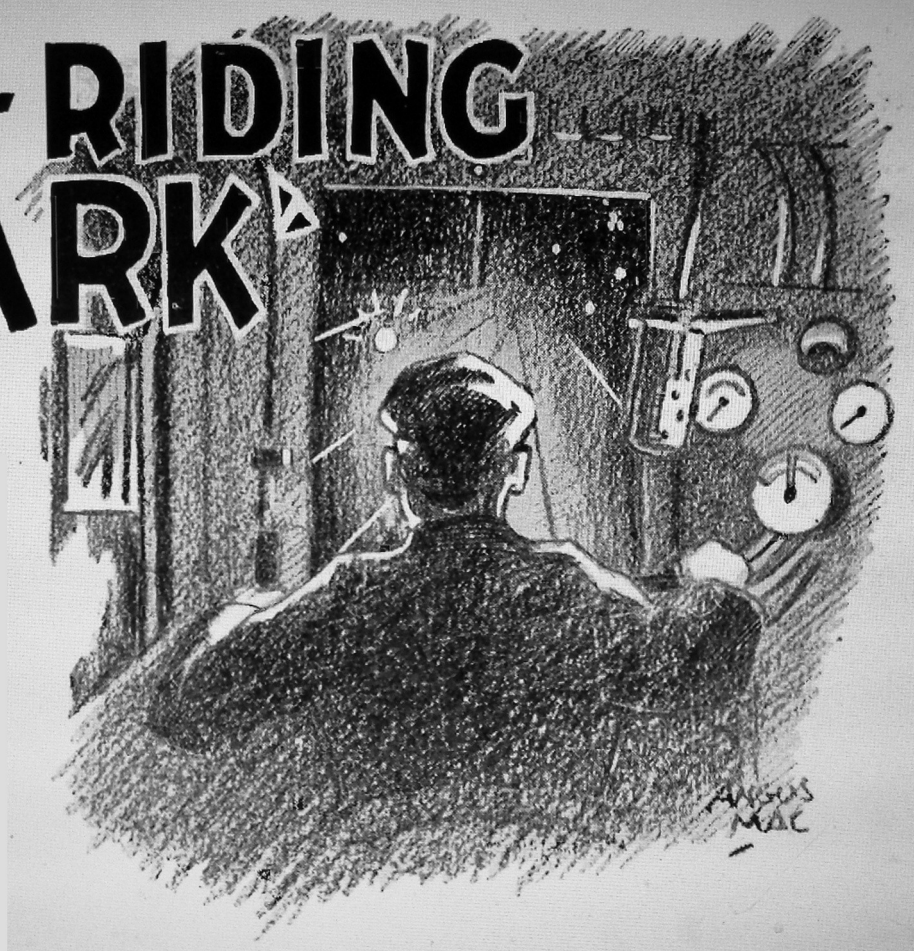
In 1928 the VR introduced the first of ten box-cab electric locomotives for suburban goods work, numbered 1102 to 1111, and for some reason these were unclassified as were the two steeple-cab electrics that had been in traffic since 1923. By the fifties the box-cabs were referred to by rank and file railwaymen as "Black Locos," a reference to their often grimy solid black paint jobs. Numbers 1100 and 1101 with their short slanting noses were the "Dive Bombers" while the pairs of back-to-back Tait or Swingdoor Motor coaches used on some goods services were nicknamed "Red Locos."

It seems these sobriquets had yet to be concocted in March 1930, when this little piece was published.

*(introduction by Trevor Penn;
article edited here by Warren Banfield)*

NIGHT-RIDING A "SPARK"

By C. H. Cheong



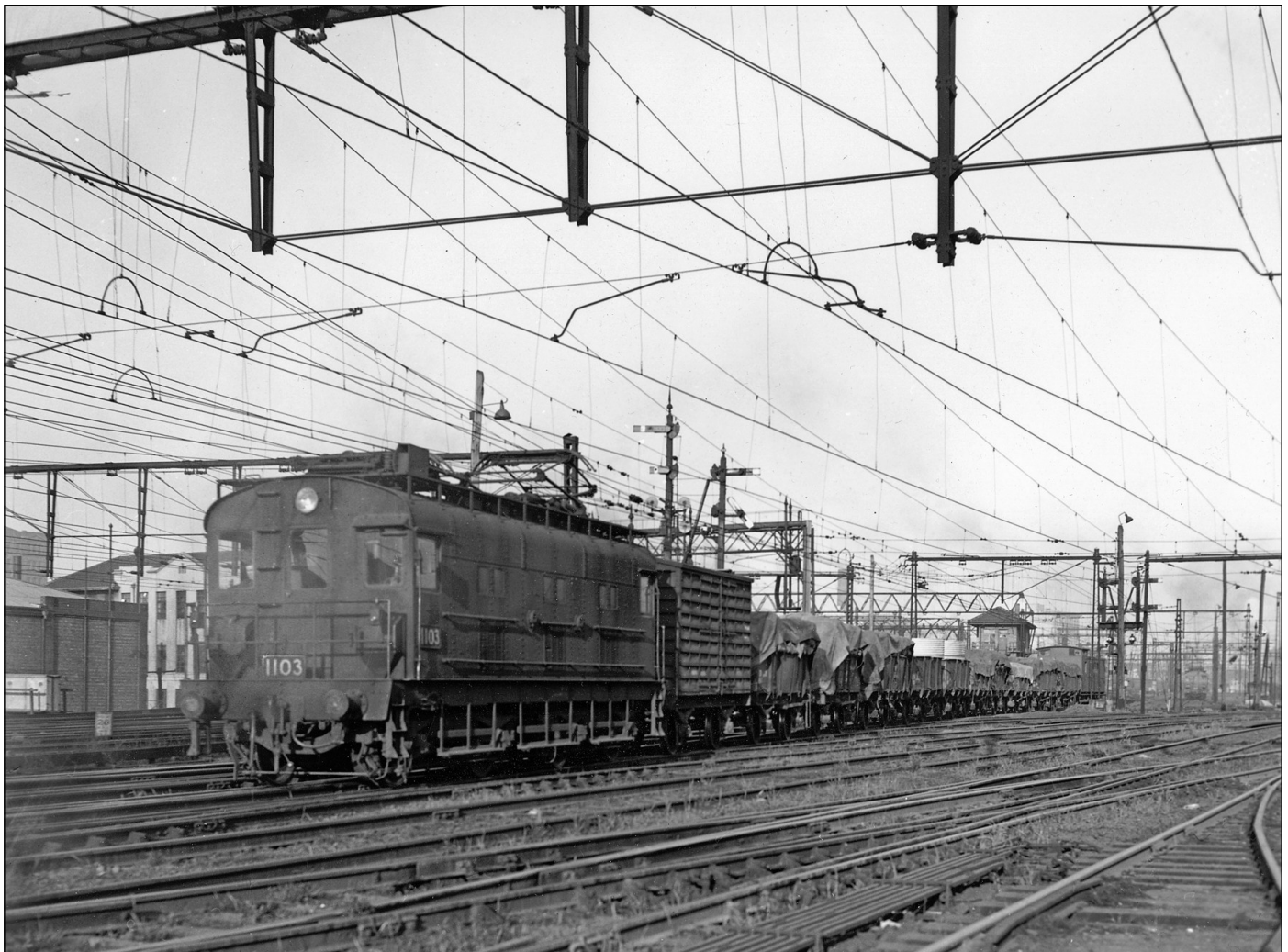
With something akin to awe, I approached the sleek electric locomotive standing in the Jolimont yard. The night was black as pitch, but the light from a shunter's hand lamp played on the rivet heads and the gleam traced the square plates that strengthened the sides. A sand box on either side introduced the idea of a sinister gun barrel.

Outwardly, it was the armoured car of military patrols. It required no flight of fancy to imagine this steel-sheathed monster spurring a hail of bullets at combatants.

I climbed the steps to the railed platform and went through the door where the driver and his mate, the observer, sat one each side of the compartment. There was no

perceptible embarrassment at the prospect of an unexpected passenger, and they greeted me with welcoming hands.

The driver was most anxious to correct my frequent allusion to his "electric locomotive". "Say 'Sparks'" he admonished gravely. "That's what we call it." He proceeded grimly, "Parts of it bite, you know."



The Driver and Observer peer into the low afternoon sun as screw-coupled 1103 comes off the Viaduct Goods Lines, passing behind Franklin Street Signal box and the West Melbourne Stadium (renamed Festival Hall in the early sixties). The train will head towards the Coburg Goods Lines then set back over Dudley Street into one of the nine Receiving Sidings that converged at their southern end to form the neck of the Gravitation Yard, known to all as "The Gravi."

There is a Shunter's training film made in and around this area containing a vast number of what are now serious OH&S violations, but were once part of everyday railroading. Entitled *Rules For The Road*, it seems to date from the late forties and was certainly filmed before the introduction of the cute little F class diesels in September 1951. It can be

found on YouTube and is highly recommended to anyone with an interest in the dear departed Victorian Railways.

This photo like so many is undated, but was most likely exposed in the early fifties. Bringing up the rear is a four-wheeled brake van, distinguishable by its flat bottomed canopy windows. Much squinting through a magnifying glass reveals it to be one of the panel sided variety of Z vans from the 1950 or '51 batches, and referred to disparagingly by Goods Guards as "Canny's Coffins" (after Michael Joseph Canny, the one time Commissioner who was blamed for their introduction in 1941). These austere little chariots provided a noisier, and possibly even rougher ride than their more numerous six-wheeled counterparts.

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE PHOTO, EARLY 1950s. PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN

I recoiled hastily from an elongated metal box, whose perforated front appeared wicked enough to hide any quantity of death-dealing electricity. "No, that's all right, it's only my locker" he reassured me. "What I meant was fiddling. If you fiddle with this apparatus, you're apt to get bitten, and those teeth will sink to the extent of 1500."

I didn't know how drastically "1500" would perform with me, but it sounded so impressively dangerous that I dived my hands deep into the pockets of my overcoat.

The driver explained the controls. Carefully and intelligently I followed his verbose description of the



equipment, his eloquent interpretation of series running and his lecturette on the advantages of electric locomotion. Wisely I nodded my head at opportune moments, and when he had finished I asked him what made the thing go. The observer delivered himself of a hollow cough and looked significantly at the driver, who hastened to turn the conversation to cricket, and the iniquity of Ryder's exclusion.

I looked at my watch. It showed 11.45. Theatre trains rushed patrons homeward. Gaily frocked ladies and white shirt-fronted cavaliers were in the majority. The breeze whisked the ends of dainty gowns in the

open doorways as the carriages passed.

From Prince's-bridge the voice of the city was wafted down — a voice finding expression in newsboys' cries, in the traffic rumble, in the raucous invitation of the pisan to sample his wares... the uneasy utterance of a civilized city settling down to sleep.

"All clear George", said the observer, and 1105 glided almost imperceptibly through the yard past No. 1 platform, rumbled on, was switched to another road and came back down No. 8 track in readiness for its train. The last trains drew in at the platform. Late passengers made

last minute dashes down the ramp, flopped into seats and sighed with evident relief at their escape from the mercy of the taxi-driver.

The trains gathered way. Lights in the yard shone steadily. Green, red and yellow pin points in the distance changed rapidly as trains sped past.

Then there was silence. The voice was stilled. The great city slept...

For us the spell was immediately broken. Out of the night a rake of trucks appeared, drawn by a steam engine. The enginemen bade a cheery goodnight and their locomotive panted off for the next item on the night's roster. We

backed on to the trucks and coupled up.

The signalbox inhabitants set the road and the observer passed the message from the coloured lights. The driver tugged his whistle cord, slewed a handle, pulled a lever, pushed a knob and we threaded our way through the maze of steel ribbons stretching into obscurity. The lights from 1105 flashed in fantastic shooting gleams along the rails.

I stood behind the driver and peered through his window. Dimly the MCC brick buildings rose out the blackness and were swallowed up again. Farther along, the headlights



A "sun shower" has moistened the platforms at Royal Park as 1104, equipped with the later transition coupler, and assisting a chunky, oil burning A2 arrives with a special train conveying visitors for the nearby Zoo.

Once the kids have been turfed out in the rain to frolic among the monkey cages and ride on the long suffering elephant, the train will continue on to North Carlton. There the old ten-wheeler will probably be detached and run back "light" to North Melbourne Loco for turning and engine requirements, while the Black Loco with the empty cars will continue on clockwise around the Inner Circle to Clifton Hill and thence

Prince's Bridge. The lightweight PL cars would be pushed back into PB Yard to be parked, and maybe even swept out, while awaiting the return working.

Widely disparaged in their later years when they had long passed their use-by date, these PL vehicles were constructed around 1919 using second hand underframes. The grateful customers were provided with passageways and lavatories (hence the classification), as well as Pintsch gas lighting and padded seats; luxuries that were totally lacking in the "seated trucks" with tarpaulin roofs formerly used in excursion service.

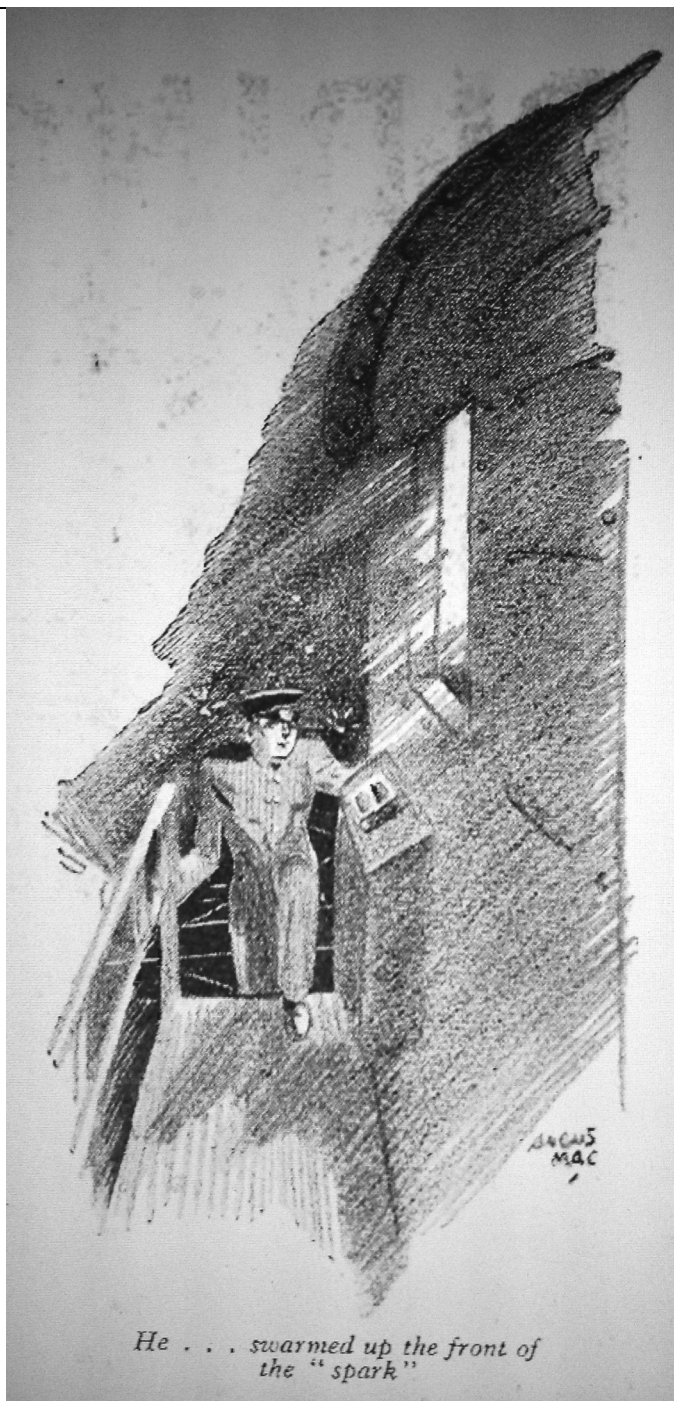
P.R.O. PHOTO, EARLY TO MID 1950s. PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN

of a car lit the driver's face for an instant. Seen in that flash, his eyes were set on the track, his chin stuck forward and he sat in an easy position, his two hands firmly moving the controls. Then oblivion, and as my eyes grew accustomed to the dark again his silhouetted form took shape and outline in the frame of the window.

Outside the darkened Richmond station, a big-eyed advertisement negro grinned his approval and raised his cap to our health. I suppressed a wave, and walked through the passage flanked on either side by electrical equipment — grim forbidding apparatus, enamelled appropriately jet black. I stood on the rear platform and looked back. A low truck of metal moved immediately in our wake, an "H" truck followed, dimly a louvre's top showed and, seemingly miles away, the side light of the guard's van kept its distance.

We crossed the river. Through the steel lattice work a dark facsimile of 1105 entered the water and shot to the other bank. We slipped through South Yarra where a few isolated houses showed out with streaming light from doors and windows. Strains of music floated down the wind — revelry.

A waving hand lamp stayed us at Windsor, and we dropped two trucks of wood and one of berry fruit. We shunted the trucks to the siding and, picking up 15 empties, went our way. A yard porter joined us and Windsor was left behind. At Elsternwick another waving lamp swung to and fro. We dropped off a truck of sand, a truck of grain foods and yet another of wood. The yard porters rode on 1105 with us and at each station operated the signals, set the roads, worked the crossing gates and with the guard



He . . . swarmed up the front of the "spark"

accomplished the shunting. Economical working this — no signalmen required to be brought on night shift.

More empties were coupled on and we sailed to Middle Brighton, staying outside the yard while the acting signalmen went ahead to reconnoitre. A truck of potatoes, two of metal screenings and two more of wood ran down the siding with our able assistance. The driver, as at each of these "pick-ups", examined the brakes, door fastenings and couplings of the empties and we moved on. It was nearly 4 a.m. when we had dinner, maybe it was an early breakfast, or even lunch. It

seemed like a very late supper to me and I was sleepy.

"We're finished the work", the driver said, "but we've got to run down to Brighton Beach to cross to the up."

Dozing, I acquiesced. The desire to sleep was overpowering. I wrongly answered "yes" to two comments and said "no" when a positive reply would have tactful.

I wasn't used to a double shift. My head nodded several times and then dropped violently, but I aroused myself and took a firm grasp of the situation. Streaks of daylight dispelled weariness and I took more interest in the proceedings.

Tang of the salt air drifted in from the roaring sea as we crossed at Brighton Beach — platforms strangely silent — deserted. We waited whilst the yard porter returned from the signal-box. He strode along the platform and swarmed up the front of the "spark". The driver leaned across confidentially. "He's a fine footballer, great mark. Plays league football."

We left Brighton Beach to run in ahead of the first train. Milkmen rattled down side streets, jumped from moving carts and ran round the backs of houses to fill waiting jugs.

At Elsternwick we parted with the yard porter-who-was-an-athlete, and at Windsor his companion stepped off. The day shift signalmen were taking possession.

Back in the Jolimont yard the empty trucks were uncoupled and the cheery guard disappeared. Freed from her task, 1105 went up through Flinders-street station, onto the viaduct, and ran back to No. 1 platform. First trains were leaving. Early workers walked briskly along the streets. Traffic stirred on the roads.

The city was clearing its throat. Shortly its voice would raise.

RETIREMENTS

To Marc,

I am writing to inform you I will be resigning from my current position with Metro Trains and as such would like to resign from the union. My last shift will be on Friday 24th January 2014.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for all you have done over the years.

Respectfully,
Brian Peverill
Driver Upfield—Metro Trains.

Dear Marc,
I am retiring from V/Line Passenger as of Sat 8-2-14, I hereby tender my resignation from the union as of that date.

I would like to thank past and present Union Officials whom have helped me over the last 36 Yrs & 9 Mths. All the best for the future, as tough as it is getting for you all. Stick together boys.

Gary Hammarstrom
Loco Driver—Bairnsdale.

Marc Marotta,

I am retiring on 26th April 2014 from Metro Trains and would like to cancel my membership with loco division as of this date.

Thanks to all delegates past and present for all the hard work they have done to make it an enjoyable railway career, good luck to all members for the future.

David Emmerson

Dear Marc,

I wish to resign from the union on 7th February as I am retiring from the workforce on that date due to ill health. Wish you and members all the best for the future.

Wish to thank all union delegates for all that has been done to assist me over my 39 years and 9 months.

Sincerely yours,
Alan Newton
Loco Driver—Maryborough

Dear Marc,

It is with regret that I tender my resignation from the R.T.B.U - LD as of 15th February 2014, the day I retired from the Railways.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all Union Delegates, both past & present, and also the many work mates on and off the Footplate, throughout my forty nine years' service.

Many thanks also to everyone who made my Retirement Send Off one I will never forget.

Warmest regards,
BRIAN EATON
DRIVER - SOUTH DYNON

The V/Line Sub-Division congratulates the following retirees:

DEREK HILL



BILLY WARDEN



Dimboola Retirement Function/ Social Gathering

A Retirement Function/Social Gathering was held on the 29th of December 2013 at the Dimboola Rowing sheds, to present the retirement plaques to long serving Union members Bill Weeding, Stan Bolwell, James Murty, Bob Butrium and Bruce Roberts. Unfortunately Bob and Bruce were unable to attend.

It was good to see a mixture of members of all companies gathering together for a common cause to celebrate the achievements of their fellow workmates.

For far too long we have seen many of our workmates retire without a farewell drink or plaque presentation, due to the nature of the job and the different companies we work for, but hopefully this is a start of a new beginning.

So I would like to thank Driver Trevor Clarke for his initiative and help in organising the day through the PN Intermodal social club also Driver Ian Jepson for his help and being the official photographer, and the bar staff of the Dimboola Rowing Club and all the people who turned up to make the occasion for the retiring guys a day to remember.

A big thank you to Suzi at the RTBU office for her great work in obtaining the plaques.

By A/President P Pitt
Wimmera Sub-Branch Dimboola

The following drivers were celebrated at the Dimboola Graduation Function/Social



TOP LEFT: Bill Weeding receives his retirement plaque from Driver Robert Hall. Bill started in the Railway industry in June 1963 and retired on the 12th December 2012

BOTTOM MIDDLE: Stan Bolwell (right) receiving his retirement plaque from retired Driver Tony Ward. Stan started his career in the railway industry on the 22nd of July 1963 and retired on 1st September 2011.

TOP RIGHT: James Murty (right) receiving his retirement plaque from his son Driver Chris Murty. James started in the Railway industry on the 20th April 1964 and retired 20th February 2013.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Retired Driver Basil O'Connor (right) accepts the retirement plaque on behalf of Bruce Roberts, Bruce who started on the 19th May 1975 and finished on the 26th October 2013.

BOTTOM LEFT: Retired Driver Ross (Harry) Butler (right) accepts a retirement plaque on behalf of Driver Bob Butrium, Bob who started on the 5th February 1968 and retired on the 26th October 2013.

HAVE YOUR SAY!

Metro Breaks the Rules

I'm sick of Metro not abiding by the roster code in the Enterprise Agreement. The union should take a firm stand against them and force them to abide by the roster code. We fought hard to get a new Enterprise Agreement with a roster code and it should be abided by by Metro.

M.B. (name withheld)

Dear M.B.,

I sympathise with your frustration about Metro's failure to adhere to the Industrial Agreement. I have reported on our mediation sessions. The latest report indicates a 90% compliance with the roster code. The issues that remain to be resolved is the 10% of remaining rosters that don't comply and how Metro will increase the intake of trainee drivers so as they'll be to comply with the roster code by the end of 2014.

Marc Marotta

Unfair Situation

I feel this is a grossly unfair situation that has developed: other women get paid maternity leave and because of my sexual orientation it's not available to me. The union should address this.

L.L. (name withheld)

Dear L.L.,

The union is here to fight for members' entitlements. What I can say to you is that, irrespective of your sexual orientation, this leave provision is contingent on someone having a child. I am told there are other ways for women to conceive babies—and that is the key element here. That it is maternity leave. When and if you're in this situation, please contact this office.

Marc Marotta

Free at last

I'm writing to ask: is it true that Metro could be kick out of the franchise in 2015?

K.C. (name withheld)

Dear K.C.,

What I can confirm is that the franchise renewal is to be decided in 2015. I was aware of one consortium that were making enquiries, but I have now heard of a second consortium making discrete overtures to various entities in regards to the public transport franchise.

Marc Marotta

In Solidarity

To the Loco Division,

I'm writing to ask what the division is doing to support our comrades in Geelong against V/Line's unproven allegations. I believe it's nothing more than new managers flexing their muscles to gain authority. I'm sure that our members will take industrial action to support our brothers under attack in Geelong.

Sent anonymously

Dear Anon,

The Locomotive Division has supported those members in the process thus far. We obtained legal advice from Maurice Blackburn—this advice was forwarded to the individuals concerned. I need to correct part of your assertions: all the individuals concerned, except for one, have made admissions, so it is incorrect to say that the allegations are 'unproven.' The first two individuals have been given letters advising them that V/Line's intention was to dismiss them and they were given an opportunity to put forward reasons why they ought not be dismissed. These individuals have been offered the services of Maurice Blackburn in an unfair dismissal application through the Industrial FairWork Commission.

And, for your information, the test for unfair dismissal is whether the action taken by the employer was "harsh, unreasonable and unjust." Regarding your assertion that this is bought about by new managers trying to establish their authority, I don't know. I can say that there have been unofficial discussions trying to find a more palatable outcome but to no avail. I, unlike yourself, am not sure whether members would take unlawful industrial action in support of members in Geelong. I have certainly had discussions at union meetings and am yet to hear anyone endorse such action.

The real difficulty is that employees cannot draw pay when they have been absent from the workplace. Given the current environment for unions and the Abbott Government's general attack on unions, I am sure that nothing good would come out of any unlawful action.

Marc Marotta

Metro Purge

Are you aware of another management purge in Metro? Is it right that they're getting rid of the rail safety department?

M.D. (name withheld)

Dear M. D.,

I've become aware after your letter that there's a Metro restructure. The details of which I'm not familiar, but your information is more up to date than mine. At the time of writing, I understand three managers are earmarked to disappear and I'll reproduce the email sent to this office:

Guys & Girls, Just to let you know, I will be exiting MTM on completion of my shift on Friday 2nd May, 2014, after being deemed surplus to requirements emanating from the COO Division Organisation restructure where the 'Operational Rail Safety' Department will be abolished and some Sections within that Department moved to other Divisions/Departments within MTM. After 47 years, attempts to get another 3 years with MTM to give me 50 years service has been to no avail.

Before the 'Powers to be' pull the plug on me communicating via email, I thought at least I would get an email out ASAP to let you both know of my future with MTM.

Thanks to you all for your assistance over many, many years working along side of you during the good and bad times. What lies ahead for me in the future - who knows; I will take a extended break and may pack up and head to my birth place in Yackandandah.

Cheers

Bill Uren- Project Access Advisor

To Bill Uren, who I have known as both a manager of drivers and of rail safe working: you'll be sorely missed, because of your wealth of experience and knowledge, and your integrity—especially in dealing with matters of safety. I wish you all the best for whatever endeavours you pursue in the future, and good luck.

Marc Marotta

BULLYING & THE BOSSES

By Marc Marotta



Information from the Fair Working Commission indicate that bullying in the workplace is on the increase, and of the cases for the first quarter of 2014, the majority have been perpetrated by managers. I've worked it out to be just under 92%.

These statistics may seem somewhat removed from the workplace, but we hear of claims from members being bullied that seem to correlate with these percentages.

And since the new bullying legislation has been introduced, it's certainly been utilised by workers, which would indicate that there was a need for these workplace laws.

We hear that accusations of bullying between Metro managers is not uncommon. But it appears that it's now being taken seriously by the Metro human resources department. They have now accepted a charge of bullying between managers.

This may not be news amongst our members, but some advice to members:

If you feel you've been bullied by management in any enterprise in Victoria, it is important to record the time, date and conversation—and then report it.

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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.)

Rule 14:

- 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.