



LocoLines

NEWSLETTER FOR LOCOMOTIVE
ENGINEMEN OF THE RTBU VIC

Edition No. 66 • April 2016

Metro Takes
\$ 1.18
Billion

off the Victorian tax payers!

2013-2014

Article on page 3



LOCO LINES
EDITION 66 APR 2016

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Publisher
Marc Marotta

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SECRETARY'S REPORT

By Marc Marotta
Divisional Secretary

ATO Tax Report How much is Metro costing the taxpayers?

The ATO figures have been produced for the 2013-2014 financial year income tax paid and in keeping with the fine standards Metro has exhibited to all its employees, this company extracted **\$1,188,855,343.00**. That is **One billion, One hundred and Eighty Eight million, Eight hundred and Fifty five thousand Three hundred and Forty three dollars** of our taxes.

How much tax did **Metro** pay? **\$19,964,061.00**. That is Nineteen million, Nine hundred and Sixty four thousand, and Sixty one dollars. Just over 1.6% of their total take.

If ever we have needed another strong argument for the Victorian Government to take back the franchise and install a Government-run public transport system it's this. A publicly run transport service couldn't run a shabbier service than we currently have - but public servants pay their taxes. We would at least keep the money in the Victorian economy instead of sending that obscene amount of money overseas.

It is gratifying that it is not just our Union which sees the futility and the excesses of this privatisation model. The wider community is becoming aware as the article below, written by The Age journalist Clay Lucas, demonstrates.

Report Card for Privatisation of Public Transport

Published: December 8, 2015 - 6:17PM

The past decade of private operators running Melbourne's trains and trams has done little to improve reliability and punctuality. Meanwhile, Victorians are handing Melbourne's public transport operators hundreds of millions of dollars more in subsidies, new findings by Melbourne University transport experts show. They argue the Andrews government must come up with a better system if private operation of the city's public transport is to continue.

"If we are going to continue with this model, then we have to be much tougher on the operators to deliver," said one of the report's authors, Melbourne University transport planning lecturer John Stone. "The people who are writing the contracts for Victorians have to be much smarter and much tougher."

The government, however, argues that simply assessing the massive jump in public transport spending over the past decade purely against punctuality and reliability figures ignores significant increases in patronage and extra services now running. The Andrews government last month began negotiating possible contract extensions with both Metro Trains and Yarra Trams, with deals signed under the Brumby government expiring within two years.

Melbourne's trains and trams were taken out of public operation and given to private operators to run in 1999.

The then premier Jeff Kennett declared at the time that, within five years Melbourne, would experience "the most wonderful change to the quality of public transport". Meanwhile, subsidies from the public were predicted to fall to zero by 2010. Instead, government payments for private operation of Melbourne's trains and trams has ballooned by 40 per cent in real terms in the past decade – from \$938 million in 2004-05 to \$1.33 billion in 2012-13.

"Almost all of this increase has gone to the train franchisee, Metro Trains Melbourne, in the form of additional payments for maintenance," the report said. "Total payments to [Metro] grew by 63 per cent." They rose from around \$600 million in 2004 to almost \$1 billion by last year. But the paper, to be released at The State of Australian Cities conference on Thursday, finds Melbourne's railway operators since 2004 have increased services by only 30 per cent.

The report also explores the unforeseen problems that have emerged since the government signed the 1249-page

contracts for Metro to run the city's rail system in 2009 – especially its much-loathed practice of station skipping. "Loose definitions in the contracts have allowed Metro to avoid penalties by skipping stops to make up time on delayed trains," the report finds. "In addition, caps on penalties since 2009 have meant that failing to meet targets is more a public relations problem than an issue of major concern to shareholders." Metro reduced its practice of station skipping only after intense pressure from government, following media coverage of the practice.

The paper finds that the Andrews government must negotiate much harder to achieve more specific – and publicly assessable – commitments for improvements for the public from the operators. Public Transport Minister Jacinta Allan said that there had been significant patronage growth on trains and trams in the last decade, along with increased spending and more services running. She said that performance requirements, penalties and enforcement measures would be considered in negotiations with private operators, "to ensure services improve as our transport system grows".

Dr Stone said that, during the periods of the Baillieu and Napthine governments, there was "no appetite for chasing the operators". "They could have cracked down on station skipping. As soon as a loophole appears, they need to be using whatever method they can to put pressure on the operator." He said the new contracts, assuming the government proceeds with the current system, needed to look at far more than just punctuality and reliability, and focus on what users need. "The large increases in maintenance funding [for Metro], they are not tied to any performance outcomes – things as simple as how many kilometres of track have been renewed. There is nothing in the public domain that explains what all this money is being spent on."

This story was found at: <http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/billions-go-to-train-and-tram-operators-with-little-improvement-20151208-glilfc.html>

Author Clay Lucas, permission to reproduce provided on 4.3.16

V/Line EA Update

The Union and V/Line had been working on a replacement EA up until late 2015. Unfortunately the issue of non installation of track lubricators and the wear on the wheels and tracks sidelined the EA negotiations. V/Line then advised approximately eight weeks ago that they were working on an alternate position for the EA which was an extension of 12 months on the current EA. V/Line claimed that it was seeking approval for this from the current State Government and it was causing inordinate delay.

My personal view is that V/Line was seeking a change and trying to convince Treasury of the benefit of this change to V/Line. This week V/Line sent a scrap of paper without any identification, date or any of the requirements of a formal offer. The content itself asked for an extension of 12 months to the current EA but wanted work practices that were currently on trial to remain in place, and a range of other changes to be part of this extension. V/line wanted all this for a 1% increase because the offer was 4% for 12 months with no back pay and more importantly with no rise in your hourly rate backdated, however they did offer a one off payment of \$2000, which you would lose about half in income tax reduction. Our division and the Ops division have rejected this offer. The RTBU has demanded that V/Line re-commence negotiations in accordance with the Fair Work Act. We have also placed a time limit of one month for some meaningful progress to be made in negotiations. If none is made we reserve our right to make application for a Protected Action Ballot—we will keep you appraised.

Angry Exchange

In 2011 the current State Locomotive Division President Wayne Hicks and myself had an animated discussion with the then V/Line engineers regarding the installation of track lubricators. We were advised that they were going to install what they described as silicone lubricators on R.R.L. project and in any event "why was the Union concerned about this aspect to rail operations?"

About the same time we noticed that grease pots on the Metro system were not being serviced and in-fact were being disconnected.

The photo to the right is the rail that was taken off the flyover where no track lubricators were installed. The wear on the track at the head of the rail is obvious and the wear on the wheels would be equally acute. That is why the Union was involved in arguing with engineers about the installation of track lubricators. It has caused great interruption to the services on the V/Line system, Metro being equally as guilty of not maintaining trackside infrastructure, as most Metro drivers can attest to.

The only factor that prevented Metro being equally embarrassed was that they run a far larger fleet and the wear is distributed across and greater number of



vehicles, but Metro was close to a similar situation as the multiple derailments at Merri station illustrated. This is the side effects of cost cutting and not wanting to fund infrastructure staff to maintain grease pots and other trackside infrastructure.

Below is a little Ditty that captures the inane activities of the Powers That Be:

Regional Rail Link (Track Lubricators – grease pots)

There once were four entities named
Everybody (Liberal Politicians),
Somebody (V/Line),
Anybody (Engineers) and
Nobody (Public Transport Victoria - PTV)

This is the story of an important RRL Project – a job that had to be done and Every Body was sure that Somebody would do it.

Anybody could have done it, But Nobody did it.

Somebody got angry about that because it's Everybody's job.

Everybody thought that Anybody could do it, but Nobody realised that Everybody wouldn't do it.

It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done and the CEO of Somebody lost his head!

Pacific National Rural & Bulk Race to the Bottom

An announcement was made on March 15 2016 regarding the takeover bid of Asciano. Brookfields and QUBE are to run Asciano Ports as a joint venture.

The rail business has been sold to a consortium of companies including Canada Pension plan, Chinese Investment Corp, British Columbia Investment Management Corp, Qatar Investment Authority and GIC Private—previously know as Government of Singapore Investment Corp.

This sale will be subject to approval of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission.

What does this mean to our members?

Until the dust is settled and decision is made, it is impossible to predict except to say that the level of uncertainty and angst in the workforce will continue. It could be an explanation for the current PN R&B management thinking in trying to reduce members wages and apply unique and onerous work conditions to the workforce, which can be attested to by the summary of PN R&B wish list for the next EA, replicated below.

PN R&B EA Update

Pacific National Rural & Bulk initiated bargaining for a new Enterprise Agreement and issued Notices of Employee Representational Rights to all its employees approximately three weeks ago. Your current industrial agreement does not nominally expire until 31 December 2016, which means that the current agreement stays in place until a new agreement is reached and is endorsed by you, the employees who have to work under the agreement.

It is unusual for a company to commence bargaining discussions so early in the current agreement cycle. Speculation has been widespread as to PN R&B's motivation. It may be that the company sees some benefit and advantage to it in pursuing bargaining in the recent atmosphere of redundancies and loss of rail contracts.

At this stage, all we have received is a wish list from PN R&B management.

We are under no obligation to agree to any of the PN R&B proposals.

The Locomotive Division will continue to meet and bargain with PN R&B on your behalf, in order to ensure that a fair agreement is negotiated.

The RTBU Locomotive Division has yet to compile a log of claims that represent the membership's wishes.

Due to some misinformation circulated in the workplace by management, I consider it necessary to provide a report back on the details as to what has been proposed by PN R&B. Below is a list of changes PN R&B wishes you to accept:

- The current level 4 rate per hour is \$52.74 which has a 40 hour guarantee per week. This includes shift penalty, weekend penalty and a number of other sundry allowances that make up your current aggregate wage. This results in an Annual Rate of \$109,689.
- PN R&B proposes to reduce your weekly guarantee of hours from 40 hours to 38 hours per week.
- PN R&B wishes to remove the payment of shift penalties from the current aggregate wage so that it is only paid when an individual actually works shift work under a new defined parameter by PN R&B of 12 hours day shift or 12 hours night shift (please note that this is not accepted by the Locomotive Division).
- PN R&B wishes to remove the weekend shift penalty component from the current aggregate wage and only pay weekend shift penalty when employees work on weekends.
- PN R&B wishes to remove Annual Leave loading as a component in the current aggregate wage and pay the loading when the employee takes annual leave (this is a cost cutting exercise by removing it from the hourly rate and is not agreed to by the Locomotive Division).

The effect of PN R&B proposals is an overall reduction in your hourly rate. The documentation presented by PN R&B is misleading because it represents a new figure of \$104,205 per annum. Unfortunately this is subject to the employee garnering a high level of shift penalties where across the State there is considerable variability.

The equation really is more accurately described by the figure of \$84,142 which converts to approximately \$42.58 per hour. In addition to this PN R&B wishes to eliminate payment for

private vehicle use, has divided the State into 5 territories and wishes to implement multiple sign on and off locations within the 5 territories. The 5 territories are designated as:

West: Dimboola, Warracknabeal, Murtoa – distance in variability for sign on locations is 65.5km

Central: Maryborough, Dunolly, Bendigo – distance in variability for sign on locations is 69km

North: Ouyen, Merbein, Carwarp, Yelta, Speed, Manangatan – distance in variability for sign on locations is 166km

South: Melbourne Geelong, Appleton Dock – distance in variability for sign on locations is 75km

South West: Hamilton, Portland – distance in variability for sign on locations is 84km

PN R&B has not put forward a pay offer in annual percentage increases. They have advised that they will forward something in the next few weeks prior to 31 March 2016 which is when we are scheduled to meet again.

I have described the PN R&B proposal as a “race to the bottom” and perhaps at PN R&B they should focus on securing more rail work contracts because based on recent performance, that is a serious flaw in the current PN R&B management.

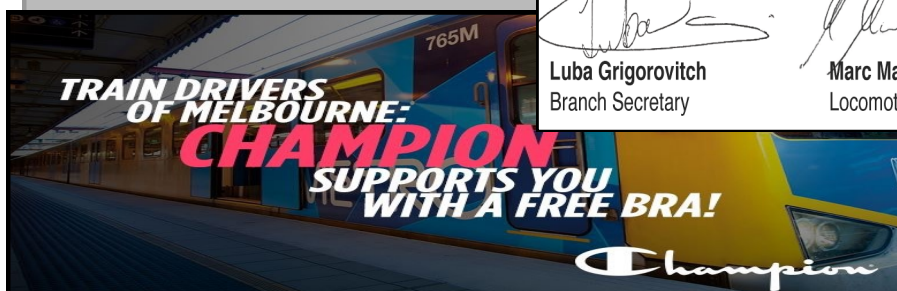
Members should be aware that we are not required to accept any of these PN R&B proposals. The Locomotive Division will ensure that the Fair Work Act is applied and the current enterprise agreement stays in place until such time as we get a fair and reasonable replacement to the current enterprise agreement.

Personal Protection Equipment

In the last edition of Locolines the issue of sports bras was raised by a member from V/Line with information about the possible detrimental health effects of wearing inadequate support garments whilst operating a train.

With the assistance of the State Secretary Luba Grigorovitch, this was highlighted further in the public domain and a good result was achieved.

To the right is the joint advice issued to members affected.



ATTENTION DRIVERS

Following a campaign led by RTBUWomen, Champion sportswear have offered to give all on-train workers a free compression sports bra.

Simply present your employment ID at a Champion outlet store (Scoresby, Uni Hill, BrandSmart, Collingwood) to claim one free compression bra. Offer available until 31 March 2016.

It's unfortunate that rail operators are not willing to recognize and mitigate risk of injury in the way it should be under the OH&S act, however the campaign for appropriate PPE across the industry will persist. Risk mitigation is the employer's responsibility.

Coopers ligament injury is a growing concern that has affected numerous female train drivers in the past. Given the current lack of track maintenance and rigid bogie systems, it is important that you are not put at further risk at work.

Get your free bra today and ensure that you are protected at work!

Luba Grigorovitch
Branch Secretary

Marc Marotta
Locomotive Divisional Secretary

QUBE EA

The issue of a new EA is not yet resolved, it is complicated because it involves bringing together three different Enterprise Agreements that had their origins in different rail companies that were acquired by Qube. Negotiations were stagnant for nearly 18 months and some members have had a wage freeze for nearly three years. At the time of writing this article we were waiting on an improved offer in hourly rate, classifications and one off payment to address the wage freeze.

If these matters are not addressed, the RTBU-LD will make application for a Protected Action Ballot Order to enable members to decide whether industrial action should be taken to further our claims. Members are determined to have these longstanding grievances addressed

Employee Assistance program —Or not ?

V/Line uses the services of a specialist psychological organisation called Barrington Centre, presumably a group of psychologists operating in the corporate fashion offering a range of psychological and counselling services. Our members are offered counselling services by Barrington's after traumatic events such as fatalities and other work related issues that members may encounter in the course of their working lives. V/Line contracts Barrington Centre to deliver these services and on face value it would seem to be an admirable service being offered to V/line employees and our members.

Unfortunately recent experiences lead the Locomotive Division to question the V/Line / Barrington association, in particular dealings with a member that was involved in a collision with a Metro suburban train in August 2014. The V/Line driver could easily have been killed and at the time, the incident was subject to an investigation by a number of rail entities. The Locomotive Division got access to fault history of the Metro suburban train involved, which indicated that there was a problem with failed illumination of the end of train marker lights for three days prior to the collision. This was provided to V/line as background information for the investigation and at that time there was a concurrent legal application initiated by the Locomotive Division.

The Locomotive Division were taking Metro and Worksafe to a legal tribunal disputing the practice and ruling by Worksafe that trains were safe to operate without tail and headlights at night. The Locomotive Division deemed this to be patently unsafe for its members and the members of the public. Interestingly Metro sought to settle the matter out of court some weeks post the above incident. Settlement was reached that no suburban trains were to come into service without working tail and headlights. Metro avoided the court action and associated publicity.

The V/Line investigation continues without a conclusion to this date. We see no evidence that V/Line has sought to make the workplace safe for its employees in dealing with Metro who was creating, in our view, an unsafe workplace for all members of other enterprises in Victoria and the travelling public by putting trains into service without working headlights and tail lights.

In contrast V/Line has been dogged in trying to ascribe fault to the driver for the accident because there was no apparent reason for the collision except the bleeding obvious that the disabled suburban train was in darkness and unseen by the V/Line driver in sufficient time.

The Locomotive Division is committed to safety and at the Union's request the individual involved was asked to submit to a sleep apnoea test independently from V/Line. This was done to eliminate one possible cause for a driver not being attentive whilst operating a train. The result of the driver's test was that he did not suffer from sleep apnoea. The Locomotive driver is doing alternative duties in the interim.

Unbeknownst to the Locomotive Division the driver was requested by V/Line to submit to a psychological test to be conducted by the Barrington Centre, which he duly submitted to. When the Locomotive Division made requests of senior management about the driver returning to his driving duties, we were informed that there was an issue identified by the Barrington's psychological assessment. With the consent of the driver, The Locomotive Division requested the results and the format of this assessment to be provided, in order to have the assessment reviewed by an independent psychological firm. V/Line initially agreed to this, but this information was not forthcoming, we further pursued V/Line for the contents of the report and the format of the test, and V/line then advised that they wouldn't release it but that the driver involved could request it in writing from Barrington Centre. The Locomotive Division became very suspicious of this lack of information and the fudging of the issue by V/Line, of what exactly the driver was tested for and the format used, and how was V/Lines outcome arrived at.

In discussions with the driver involved we became aware of what we considered to be inappropriate questioning by Barrington Centre about track telemetry, track conditions and positioning of trains. The question was asked of V/Line of what possible relevance do these questions have to the mental state of the individual involved, and what expertise Barrington Centre has in matters dealing with Rail. The Locomotive Division engaged Maurice Blackburn to deal with Barrington Centre in the request for the format and the results of the psychologic assessment, and the process employed by Barrington Centre in its assessment of the driver with a view to having it peer reviewed.

To date Barrington Centre has not been forthcoming with the information for the individual concerned. This is a very serious matter because it appears V/Line has justified its decision by a secret process that is not agreed or understood by any of the parties. V/Line's belief is that the driver ought not to drive again, based on Barrington's tailored secret findings, to date not produced by them, which prevent a member returning to their occupation. The lack of a clearly defined process employed by V/Line and Barrington Centre is of great concern.

Barrington Centre advertises services delivered under the heading of "Employee Assistance Program" which it offers V/Line management, and in its own blurb under the sub-heading 'Manager Assist Services' states that:

"Barrington Psychologists are available to assist Managers and Supervisors on an array of staff issues."

It seems that Barrington is living up to this stated service to V/Line. It is the Locomotive Division's view that members should steer clear of Barrington Centre as it could be described as another arm of V/Line management. This matter will be pursued by the Locomotive Division and to prevent this occurring again it may be included in the clauses for the next EBA.

Marc Marotta



ASSISTANT SECRETARY REPORT

By Jim Chrysostomou
Divisional Assistant Secretary

Conflict of Interest Does it exist on the Railways in Victoria?

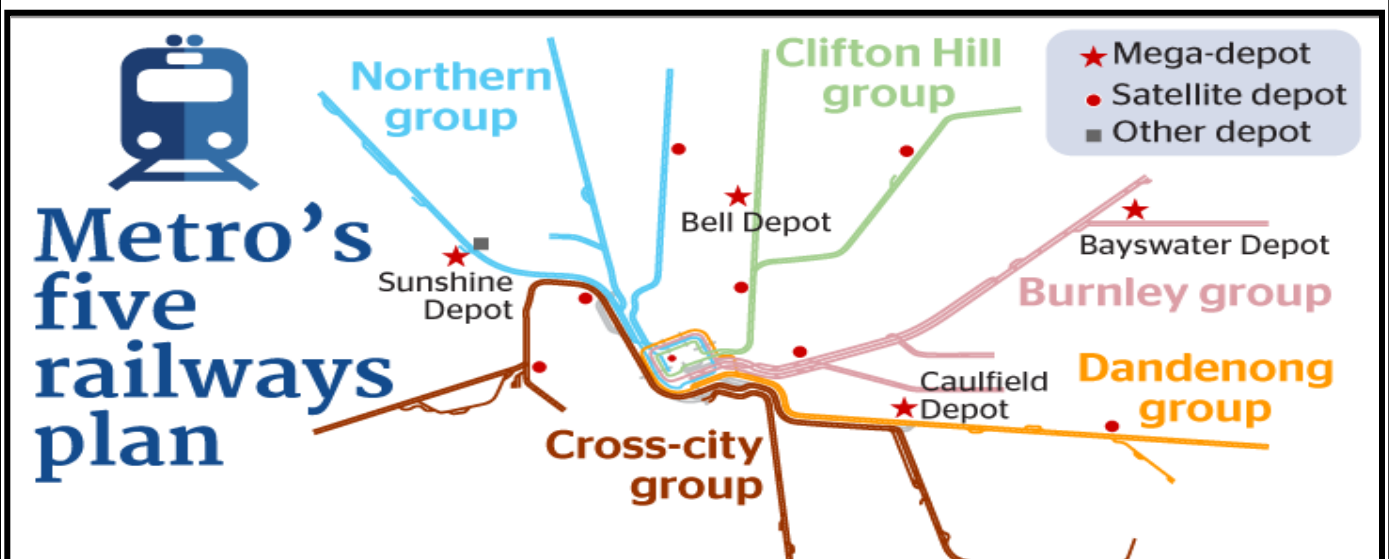
Recently I became aware of employees resigning from Metro Trains Melbourne (Metro) and taking up prominent roles within Public Transport Victoria (PTV). The appearance of a conflict of interest can be just as damaging to public confidence as would a conflict which gives rise to a concern based on objective facts.

We, the members of the rail industry and the public, are entitled to have confidence in the integrity of public officials and to know that a Victorian Public Service employee's personal interests do not conflict with his or her public duties.

Example 1

During enterprise bargaining it became apparent that the PTV and Metro had sold the previous government on a proposed structure for the Metropolitan Network which would see the network segregated into five separate groups. With no real benefit for the travelling public and an attempt by Metro and their accomplices in PTV to undermine the terms and conditions of Locomotive Grade Employees.

Fortunately Metro was unsuccessful in their pursuit for five groups because of a hard fought campaign by the RTBU.



Five Group Diagram from 'the Age' 29/07/15 Article – 'Metro plan to split the network into five lines hangs on Union fight'

Example 2

A subsidiary of Metro called Sunstone Resources received an exemption from PTV in having to tender publicly for lucrative contracts. The arrangement consisted of contracts being awarded by its owner Metro without having to tender. *This arrangement meant that no other contractor stood a chance to receive any work.*

A KPMG review initiated by the Victorian Government Minister Jacinta Allan led to an end of this exclusive arrangement.

Example 3

The rules applied on how 'On Time Running' and services completed have been significantly relaxed for Metro. As a matter of fact the previous franchise operator Connex Melbourne had more stringent rules and unlimited penalties imposed. Under the Metro arrangement there is no monetary penalty the money is only withheld.

Q. How is it possible that when you do not provide a full service or on-time running when it is within Metro's control you achieve figures in the ninetieth percentile?

A. You write your own data and submit the information to PTV.

Example 4

Wednesday the 23rd March there was a signal failure that caused serious disruption.

On this occasion Metro did not blame bats at Camberwell or rats at Richmond but the ageing signalling system and also lay blame previously on treasury.

Now I am not an engineer like the CEO of Metro Mr Andrew Lezala or Isambard Kingdom Brunel FRS, who was an English mechanical and civil engineer considered one of the most ingenious and prolific figures in engineering history, and who Mr Lezala was compared to by Mr Lezala himself, **but** if you do



Isambard Kingdom Brunel FRS



Left to Right
Former Transport Minister Terry Mulder, Former CEO PTV Ian Dobbs,
Metro CEO Andrew Lezala

not maintain the signalling system it will fail.

An observation that will be consistent with members who work on the railways and the travelling public of Victoria is that there have never been the amount of signalling failures, infrastructure failures, rolling stock failures occur on the network until Metro became the franchise operator for the Metropolitan System.

These failures may be a ploy by Metro to embarrass the Victorian Government into giving them more money from the public purse to make up for the loss of recent projects...after all Metro sent a meagre \$1.18 Billion Dollars Profit to MTR Hong Kong from the taxpayers of Victoria.

Conclusion

In the coming years public transport is going to get an injection of significant funding and to avoid the usual mark-ups of contingency and profit and design costs for projects, the tax payer funding needs to be spent appropriately and the only way to achieve this objective is through multiple stakeholder consultation and this needs to happen before a project commences or a contract is awarded.

We have to learn from the mistakes of recent projects otherwise no improvements will be made and we'll continue to see misspent public money, job losses and the increase of severity in network incidents.

Jim Chrysostomou



By Paris Jolly
Secretary—Metropolitan Sub-Division

International Safety Conference For the Health of Transit Workers Buenos Aires, Argentina

I recently attended the 5th annual Bob Crow International Safety Conference for the Health of Transit Workers held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on behalf of the National RTBU . The conference focused on asbestos, diesel fumes and whole body vibration and ran for three days with a further two days utilised to visit striking workers, public rallies and Argentinian historical and Union workplace sites. Attendees included unions from Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, United States and England.

I visited a number of worksites and was able to look at the train and tram system. The suburban train system is made up of 6 lines and 1 light rail corridor. All 6 lines are subways and it connects the sprawling city.



The tram line extends into one of the poorer areas and due to continued vandalism of ticket machines the tram is free. Trams must not leave the depot without police on board as the area can be extremely dangerous.

I must say I felt safe on the train and tram network and did not encounter any problems whilst I was in the city. This being said two tourists staying in the same hotel had been held up by knife point in the city square only hours after I had been there. There was also a union delegate shot at a protest only a week after the conference.



Protestors in Argentina supporting those public servants terminated.

A number of Doctors attended the conference all with different specialities. One in particular was Eckardt Johanning MD.M.Sc, Occupational & Environmental



Protestors in Argentina supporting those public servants terminated.

Health Life Sciences; Columbia University, School of Family Medicine NYC, NY. He was unbelievably passionate about whole body vibration and the damage it could do to transport workers over a period of time.

outside the building was understated however once inside it housed a number of rooms including a massive conference room. This shows what can be done over a number of years to secure the Union financially for the future.

We conducted a number of whole body vibrations tests on the train and tram network and Doctor Eckardt was then to compile a report for the host Union to use in its fight to get better working conditions.

Dr Eckardt has compiled a number of studies that show transport workers are more susceptible to back injuries account of the whole body vibration.

Whilst travelling around the system I met with a lot of the Drivers and got to have a look at the meal and stand by rooms.

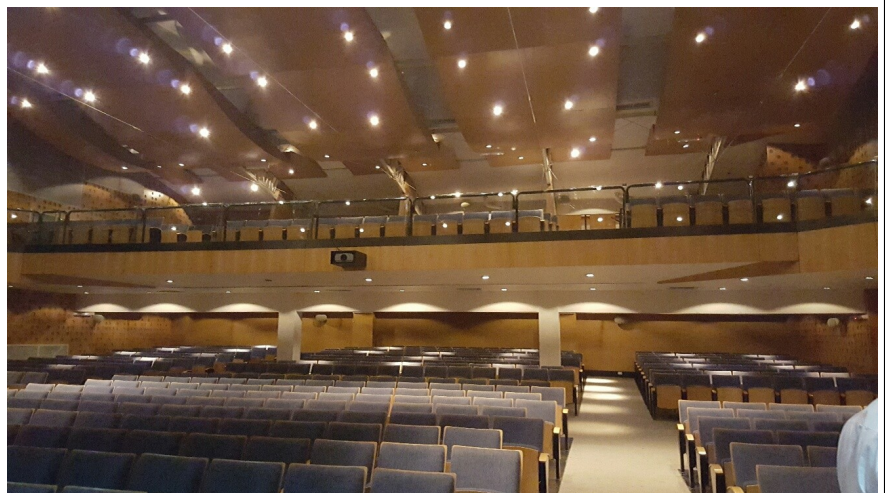


Above and Below: FOETRA Sindicato de la Telecomunicaciones Union Building Argentina

Talking to the staff it became apparent that we have a lot in common, they too are fighting similar battles to us.

I visited several protests to support the thousands of public servants that had been terminated, many of whom had worked for newspapers that published anti-government sentiments.

I also attended a number of other Union buildings one of which was the telecommunications Union, from the



CAB COMMITTEE REPORT- S.C.S

By Karl Costanzo

Cab Committee Co-ordinator

V/line have been informed and have tried to lead us to believe that a new gauge to measure wheels is accurate and will become the new standard in future. Unexplained, is that the current gauge which has been standard since our first diesels were new and is most likely written in blood, is used to measure the absolute minimum flange width of 19mm. This is measured at a certain height from the wheel tread to the back of the wheel. That is now considered obsolete and the new condemning gauge takes the measurement lower down where the flange measures out thicker.

A comparison between the gauges shows that the new one measures it below minimum, below our 'current' condemning standard. This has popped up, without consultation, and does not feature in V/line's safety management system. This new standard has been buying V/line time and allows them to squeeze another return trip to somewhere, and one more transfer run, before having to face fixing it.

There are Vlocity trains stored throughout the network awaiting wheel sets, with a projected return to service for certain units, not until June.

Consequently Cab committee drivers have stepped up and have been loco hauling Vlocitys around Melbourne since January due to the Metro ban of them over their substandard level crossings. A66 has been busy performing these important duties. Imagine if the loco hauled fleet had been retired 10 years ago, when they said they would have. V/line really would be 'up the creek'.

As of writing, the whole crisis has V/line in a spin and staff have not been briefed on timeframes for when the fleet will be fully operational and services will be restored to normal. With all of this wheel activity going on, other less demanding items and issues will go by the wayside and a catch up on maintenance of this already ageing fleet of Vlocity trains will be necessary.

One thing for drivers to be careful of is like the old school classic fleet 'running brake test', we need to take note of stopping distances on the Vlocitys. Since the wheel crisis, there have been a number of trains that have not performed whilst stopping as they should. There has not been any formal advice as to why, but my guess is as the wheels are changed out, so are some of the brake pads and possibly brake disks.

In a normal environment, a note is supposed to be

placed in both cabs of the Vlocity to advise drivers that longer stopping distances may be experienced after brake pad maintenance. Some Vlocity trains have been released from wheel change that has affected more than half of the wheels on the train.

A shake down run is necessary after repairs to ensure they meet the braking curves. We can only hope, when this is finally over, that the attention they are paying to the wheels right now is maintained.



Sprinter ICE:

This project has slowed off a bit but we should see one fitted soon. Final locations for all equipment has been decided.

N class loco rough riding on non RFR corridors is a problem with several locomotives restricted recently. New seats aren't a priority to V/line it seems with 10 locos still to be fitted.

V/line management are reluctant to initiate any drivers issues meetings lately, with the last being held in September last year. Most items on the minutes list have stagnated for years as funding seems to be the biggest issue. They are also reluctant to initiate any business cases for drivers issues. We are told that PTV won't fund anything that won't bring about an efficiency gain to V/line. So something like funding for an upgrade of the older Vlocity mirrors, that are a time consuming and health and safety issue, to electric mirrors (as per the new builds), aren't pursued. If the numbers of

reports from drivers for shoulder injuries and lost time matched reality, the situation might hit the radar for funds.

So much for V/lines reporting system. A recent publication credited this process for the upgrade of the drivers Vlocity cab steps. In reality, it was a work safe directive as the current steps breached the standards for achieving a safe ascent to the cab, and were disputed by drivers since the first Vlocity hit the rails over ten years ago.

New members joining the Cab committee late last year are:

Anthony Mcillwaine, Rhett Stone, Coupar Hind, Shaun Davitt, Steven Cox, Theo Rollinson, Matt Skirrey and Andrew Morley.

We now have a good mix of both experience and young blood in the team. Welcome to the Cab committee.

With great sadness

We farewell one highly regarded and diligent Stewart Anderson late last year.

His commitment and contribution to the cab committee over the years has been enormous. He had a great working relationship with all in V/line and out. He will be remembered and sadly missed. Condolences to Stewart's family and close friends.

Rest in peace mate.

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

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SIGNAL SIGHTING REPORT—METRO

By David Mortimer
Signal Sighting Committee

Grade Separation

The main news for the moment and into the foreseeable future will be grade separations. This will be an ongoing narrative for us if the government wins a second election.

This link will take you to a list of proposed grade separations to be handled by a separate body specifically tasked.

<http://levelcrossings.vic.gov.au/crossings>

This list does not include grade separations where a bridge over the road will suffice to separate cars from trains.

Two such projects will be Thompson Road Merinda Park where the road will go over the rail line. In this case a double lane bridge in both directions will be built over the rail line. It will be put on the reserve next to the line, the last job being the removal of the grade separation (something akin to the Koroit Creek Road grade separation).

Another will be a rail bridge over Koroit Creek Road (again) at Altona Junction. The polities justify this one on economic benefit rather than safety. No further information other than we will be on a bridge and some track alignment work will be required to wiggle around the refinery complex.

The next cab off the rank, with preworks now evident, is Bayswater. The rail is to go under the road with the rail lowered and road raised at either end between 1 meter for Mountain Highway to 1.5 meters for Scoresby Road. Signalling arrangements at present do not introduce any new signals.

The yard will be fully signalled and operation will be the same as that of Newport workshop. And yes the design team that brought you Newport workshop are doing this one as well. This means axle counters will be introduced into the yard. At least at Bayswater the axle counters have been aligned with a signal. Expect some entertainment when the yard is in operation.

A feature of Bayswater will be the entrance to the yard as it will remain in its current position. There will be a 2% gradient into the yard and the current points are approximately in the area for a bridge pylon. So you will not get a view of the yard until you have passed the pylon and starting your ascent into the yard.

This is not a killer but clearly an issue users of the yard will have to keep in mind when entering.

Gardiner has been completed with minimal pain and it has come up well considering the original plan only provided a 2d paper version to suggest where signals where to go. The only unexpected issue was the interaction of traffic lights through

the station building and into the rail corridor. These were dealt with quickly with the nature of the multi-organisation of these projects.

Lately all projects have been required to provide 3d modelling to assist in understanding the project. No set package has been used but a package called Geoconda is to be mandated for all projects going forward.

It has been interesting using the models as design engineers as definite proof that their package of signals is viewable from a train. In Bayswater case the model was bare but workable, but missed all data related to overhead structures.

This was okay in their mind and signals were fully visible at sighting ranges required and hence no issues. But so many times we have experienced Signalling engineers best efforts thwarted by the overhead branch who decided without consultation to stick a pylon or tension structure immediately in front of a signal and then proclaim that a “driver should know where a signal is”.

In the background there is some good work being done to break down this silo mentality of project / construction delivery. There is a need for all engineering rail professionals to understand what we see out of the front of the train. Then how this impacts on the passengers immediately behind this.

Some of you may get the opportunity to have one of these people travel in the cab with a PD. Take the opportunity to point out the short-comings and good points of the system if this happens.

The Greater Northern grade separation (Ormond, Bentleigh and McKinnon) is steaming ahead. Soon the up line will be closed and the down line reopened to permit pylon work on that side of the line.

One notable issue with this line is that we have not been able to get 5 light style signal lights between Patterson and Moorabbin converted to LED as they lie outside the scope of the project. We tried under BRIP to have them knocked back. Whilst these are not the worst Light style signals on the Frankston line they are not spectacular against an LED replacement. With no immediate project to pick up these lights we will be stuck with the situation of going from LED to Light to LED all the way to Cheltenham with the completion of Southland station.

Signalling Projects

Two long term projects in the wind at the moment are a review of FSS signals with identifying signal type, position, limitations and any other factor that may affect viewing and a possible SPAD. Data from this review may lead to projects related to changes that need to be made in the area.

Another project is renewals for the next financial year of signals in the RMD to FSS and SSS. Some of these signals overlap with the FSS review.

SPADS

SPADS continue at a rate we have never experienced before. There is no single golden bullet that will solve all issues. There are a number of issues that do need addressing, but we all have our favourite stories of how micromanagement at the lower levels seem to actively work against the broader story that senior management tries to deliver to us of a caring sharing work place.

It is a case we need to return to the fundamentals of what we do. Start against Stop (SAS) SPADS always seem to have an element of not taking that final look to confirm the signal is at proceed.

When taking over a train at FSS, slow down and carry out what you are trained to do. Look at the signal. Make sure it is your signal. Look at the signal. Time to depart. Look at the signal. Close the doors. Look at the signal. Solid blue light. Look at the signal. Release the brakes, Look at the signal. Power. Look at the signal.

You get the idea, use every action/stage of driving a train as an opportunity to look at the signal and to discern the aspect. The less you check the signal

Rest assured no micromanaging low level manager is going to put their hand up to say it was us pressuring you to depart on time as a reason for you having a SPAD. You have to ignore competing low level pressures and annoyances at departure time. So the onus is on you.

On the issue of SPAD's and competing issues resulting in same, this recent article from the Age should be of interest. This was a technique described to me at a previous worksite where 12 hours shifts were the norm (but we had a long weekend every fortnight as the payoff).

<http://www.smh.com.au/comment/why-hot-nights-leave-you-feeling-like-youre-battling-a-hangover-20160313-gnhn1c.html>

I am not advocating 12 hour shifts in this place but I do use this technique of cooling yourself off as much as possible to bring on sleep.

David Mortimer
Signal sighting RTBULD (Metro)



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TALKBACK WITH HINCH

By Michael A Hinch

Passenger Sub-Division—Southern Cross

**Alas poor Yorick ...We didn't know
him very long...
Or...Show us ya' Flange!**

Welcome back kiddies, to the mythical land of V/Place. In the last instalment, the Mediterranean man was trying to explain to Auntie Jacinta why there were so many managers at the V/Place. Suddenly, along came the flange monster and really rained piss on Med Man's parade. From the beginning it would have been no secret that the people from the "Crimson party" (That's because they certainly aint Red any more) would have been waiting to high jump the CEO of V/Place because he was not only a first class individual but also because he was a "Royal Blue" Party appointee. None of us will blame them for seizing the excuse because this bloke was truly an oxygen thief.

Chaos has reigned at the V/Place since someone discovered that the V/Locites had crinkle cut potato chips attached to their bogies instead of wheels.

V/PLACE CAUGHT FLANGULA FEVER!

There has been much gnashing of arms and waving of teeth. The blame game commenced very early and the Bomba (do you old guys remember the jungle boy, Bomba?) company blamed the Dutch track contractor and the Dutch track contractor blamed Bomba.... But it is conceivable that bad track ruins good bogie wheels and in turn bad wheels affect good tracks.....just sayin'.



We all know about the wheel flange problem and we all know what kind of disruption it has caused. You may all quote me again..."Just as water falls to the lowest point, thus are the politics of blame." Someone's head must end up in the deposit basket of Madam Guillotines Apron. Says Auntie Jacinta to the Mediterranean Man "Med man, as your Minister, I am going to give you two choices...one, you can come and calmly sit in this special catapult chair (which has no seat belts) and accept your fate, after which your career might just have a chance of recovering from a speed hump or two...or we can force you to sit in the catapult chair and the rest of your career will evolve around a souvlaki van perched on the high street in Tungamah.

Let us now hope that the vortex created by Med man's catapult launching into the ionosphere, will be sufficient to suck up the rest of the leeches and sycophants from our midst that this bloke introduced.

Note to Auntie Jacinta, whomever you choose as the next CEO of the V/Place, please take on board we will not tolerate another boss with the numbers 457 after his/her name. We do not need a boss from Queensland or New South Wales who does not understand our history and more importantly our culture.

DO NOT appoint a non-railway person. Just because some idiot from a university has a piece of paper that says that he/she can manage people does NOT mean that he/she can manage RAILWAY PEOPLE. We are a unique community and we have been here for 150 years before you and all of your uneducated non railway and international and interstate managers

came along and we will be here for 150 years after all of you are buried and forgotten.



A small example of the latest lunacy that one of the Pommogolian managers is trying to introduce as a matter of desperation to try and get something on his CV before he moves on to make someone else's existence a misery as a result of his incompetence. We have a manager at V/Place I refer to as the Welsh Dragon. He is the over lord of all the other managers (and Christ knows we have plenty of managers) in the locomotive general arena. There is one of the departments in his domain that if it were in the real world and not in the mythical world of V/Place would be referred to as T&C. But in this instance, let us call it the department of Tutoring and Sticking to the Rules. (Or should that be..Sticking it to the rules)

In this department, Tap Dancer has seven bodies. In his wisdom he decided that the Tutoring component of the department only needed three

tutors to handle ALL of the classes required at the V/Place and therefore he could bring in another of his brethren managers from Metro to manage the other four blokes in the guise of ...looking after the rules and regs. More managers, that is what we need...more managers. Truly it has been recognized internationally that one man cannot possibly manage seven people. It just can't be done.

We must have an extra person to manage at least four of them. I'm sure that, that must be right because The Tap Dancer says so, and he must know because he is from Pommolia, the only place on earth from which we can get managers. Only Pommy managers will do in this railway

Further note to Auntie Jacinta. (please pardon the capital letters to enhance the significance of this message.)

WE HAVE TOO MANY MANAGERS AT THE V/PLACE!!! We have never been so over managed and yet been so BADLY managed. Everything is too top heavy. For generations when we had ten times more employees in our industry we only had one manager per section and everything worked perfectly. These managers were also home grown railway people who knew what they were actually doing. Now we have a plethora of managers from non railway places and we have never been so badly managed! These people have NO operating railway experience. Hence, the mess we are in today. Each section does not need three or four managers...it only needs one. We are hamstrung by the blow in managers from Pommolia and interstate who have no idea what is going on, but mess up the system on a daily basis anyway.

When I started at South Dynon in the mid-seventies there were more than a thousand Loco men at this location and we had ONE Chief Foreman....and it worked. We were not governed by any computerized system, we had no touchy feely crap and we had no evil known as HR, (read, management advocate, ready to stick it to the

individual so that the nambies in management are free of blame for any incident and therefore so would be the company).

Rosters were done manually with a pencil and an eraser and they were posted up on the wall by 14.30 every day. No computers.....but that is another story.

Auntie JACINTA.....open your bloody eyes, recognize that we need actual rail managers back at the V/Place, get rid of the Pommgolians and the useless travellers and put real, live Victorian rail managers back where they belong. And guess what you will achieve? Harmony....The troops will fall into line and work in just as they used to before Napthine and Balliou brought in the useless bastards we have running the place now.

Any connection between characters mentioned in this article and any person living or dead...Is just a b#ch of a coincidence.*

Urban Farmers

The new Regional Rail Link (RRL) has stretched its loving embrace across many paddocks and fields through the western limits of the Melbourne greater area and it appears that it has finally encroached upon the rural sector. Picture if you will, one of Greater Melbourne's newest rail stations, Tarneit, and picture the fact that come the wheat season this year, the local farmers planted their wheat crop, just as they have for generations past and it literally surrounded this station.

What an unusual sight. A brand new suburban station surrounded by wheat, the car park stretched to the ultimate limits by about 4 gazillion cars (in fact so many cars that they are parked along the dusty gravel entrance road side by side in their scores). Suburbia has finally done its bit to invade the rural sector in a fashion that Joe average suburban bloke can

finally actually see. It is tangible and real. It is there for all to see.

I couldn't help but notice recently as I approached Tarneit on an afternoon service, a large cloud of dust coming from one of the paddocks adjacent the platform. It was the wheat Cocky "bringing up" his paddock. This involves dragging an implement behind a tractor to condition the soil. A fairly significant residual airborne quantity of his topsoil was drifting toward and settling on the platform and parked cars. Now this will be interesting I thunked. There are bound to be complaints from the suburbanites who are thoroughly unaccustomed to having their persons and vehicles shrouded in topsoil while they wait for their train. If I were the Cocky I would simply quote the Latin *Caninus blckius coitus interruptus*. You work it out.

Feel a little pity for the farm house owner who has had his little Hacienda next to the Werribee River, at the end of a country lane for about one hundred years and all the noise he and his forebears have had to contend with is the sound of the occasional Magpie or Kookaburra. Now, he has one hundred trains a day going past his back door. You really have to feel for the poor bugger. Beyond that, the new track has revealed a visual treasure or two including the pioneer cemetery near Tarneit. If you are into Genealogy, then this may be worth a visit.

A note to all the Cockies who have land in the Tarneit and Wyndam Vale general area. Get real close and loving with your adult kids because you might only see wheat fields but all that they will see is a few million dollars in land development. If they start to ask about your last will and testament then I would counsel sleeping with one eye open.

Michael A. Hinch
2016

WHERE IS IT?

with Trevor Penn and Des Jowett
edited by Warren Banfield



THE previous *Where Is It ...?* [below right] was at Goroke, on the now closed branch line from Horsham to Natimuk and Carpolac. The photographer was Des Jowett and we thank Des for allowing us to use it here.

The winners who correctly guessed Goroke were Barry Fell from Metro Flinders Street, and Geoff Brown from V/Line Bendigo. Congratulations go to them.

Meanwhile if you think you know the location of the

photograph on the *OPPOSITE* page, call the Union Office on 9682 1122 or toll free on 1800 134 095. If you answer correctly (only one guess per competition) your name will go into a hat and the winners, Sparks and Loco, will be drawn two weeks from distribution of the current *Loco Lines*.

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

GOROKE

by Trevor Penn

AT GOROKE on the Carpolac branch in western Victoria, a 102 h.p. Walker railmotor waits for departure time before its run to connect with the mainline service at Horsham one morning in January 1956.

The timber structure on the far left of the photo is a two roomed rest house which provided accommodation for the Horsham based Engine Crews, Van men and Guards who worked the branchline goods services. This building was unlined, with sheets of newspaper wedged into the gaps between the vertical weatherboards to keep out the chill winter winds from the west.

The framework above the station office, a typical VR 20 by 12 foot portable structure located at the near end of the platform, was provided for hanging a tarpaulin over the roof as a form of makeshift summer 'cooling' until the 'new' station building was ready for occupancy. Seen here in the course of (re) erection, this was a 70 year old edifice complete with 1880s style decorative gable ends previously located at Sandford, the penultimate station on the Casterton line in remote south-western Victoria. Waste not want not!

The railmotor service succumbed to 'progress' in April 1965. The branch line suffered the usual death of a



thousand cuts, and the Station Master was transferred away in February 1977 when the regular goods business was lost to the new Horsham Freight Centre. While there were grand plans to retain and upgrade part of the line in the CANAC report, these came to nought, and the entire Carpolac line, along with the short remaining stub of the Hamilton line between East Natimuk and Noradjuha, was formally closed on 13th January 1987.

Following the closure the sturdy old Sandford building was sold and re-erected for the second time on a property between Gymbowen and Goroke where it possibly survives to the present day.

Photo and caption information courtesy of Des Jowett. LL



The 'new' station building at Goroke is seen in the centre of the top photo. It had just been relocated from Sandford on the Casterton branch, out of Branxholme on the Portland railway. Sandford's building was virtually identical to that at Merino (above) which was a Staff station (TS&T) approximately halfway along the line. Pic taken in May 1978, eight months after closure. PHOTO BY WARREN BANFIELD



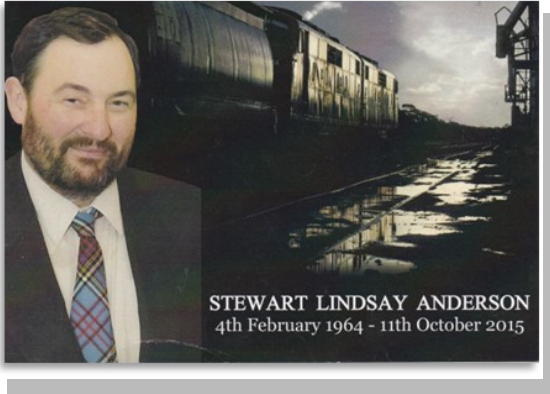
Nelson's Column.

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 FAR QUE.

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 Stewie Anderson.



A good Engineman taken too soon after a courageous 7 year battle with cancer, not once did he ever lament "Why me?". Gone but not forgotten, my condolences to Helen and family.

Pay Rises And 20% Loadings

Recently I was in a conversation with Circumference who thought that the initial 1% payrise in the last Collective Agreement wasn't enough, I pointed out that there will be an opportunity for him to stand for election and save the world from the incompetency of others to which he declined.

For Drivers at VLP the initial payrise was actually higher due to the new 20% loading on weekends, for the reason that we now work every second weekend, the payrise is calculated as $20\% \div 5 = 4\% + 1\% = 5\%$ $5\% \times 47 = 235\%$ $235\% \div 52 = 4.519\%$ up to an average depending on which days you work.

Calculation based on 47 weeks (comprising 5 x 8 Hour days with either a Sunday or Saturday) working year and 5 weeks Annual Leave per annum.

I know there will be Nay Sayers who will say it is rubbish but the facts speak for themselves.

Automation.

I was at a barbecue recently where Automation came up in relation to railways it was pointed out that there were several automated railways around the world which is quite true, using a system call Grade Of Automation 1 to 4, they usually operate as stand alone system are not part of any trunked railway.

We have a fair amount of automation in Australia, the advent of the Automatic Signal put paid to hundreds of Signal Boxes around the country and the Multiple Unit Jumper Cable spelt doom to many steam engine crews as well as End of Train Markers finished off Freight Guards in addition to S.P.O.T. Modifications on Sparks got rid of Suburban Guards.

The list is ordered in descending order of the degree of automation. It uses the Grade of Automation classifications specified by the standard IEC 62290-1.

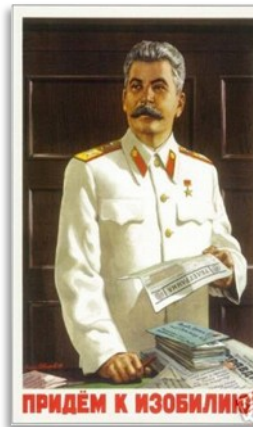
In a Grade of Automation 4 (GoA4) system like the Copenhagen Metro, trains are capable of operating automatically at all times, including door closing, obstacle detection and emergency situations. On-board staff may be provided for other purposes, e.g. customer service, but are not required for safe operation.

In a Grade of Automation 3 (GoA3) system like the London Docklands Light Railway, trains run automatically from station to station but a staff member is always in the train, with responsibility for door closing and handling of emergency situations. In a GoA3 system, the train cannot operate safely without the staff member on board.

In a Grade of Automation 2 (GoA2) system with ATO like London Underground Victoria line, trains run automatically from station to station but a driver is in the cab, with responsibility for door closing, obstacle detection on the track in front of the train and handling of emergency situations.

In a Grade of Automation 1 (GoA1) system is what we have in all states of Australia mostly to do with Automatic Signalling and CTC type set ups.

Rio Tinto is tinkering with Auto-Haul in the Pilbara without much success I hear at this stage although I wouldn't rule it out all together and Sydney light Rail is headed down that path as well.



Uniforms.

When all else fails and you wanna piss people off ban shorts and then implement a new uniform at huge cost to the taxpayer as V/Line would have you believe.

Why do we need a new uniform when the one we got is perfectly serviceable I think the Government needs to ask our management why they are pissing money up against the wall when the place is crumbling around them.

(L) John Marotta models the new V/Line Uniform. Picture; Public Domain.

Projects And Cost Cutting!

When the Regional Rail Link was first proposed it was going to be the cat's arse until the Baillieu/Naphthine Liberal Government worked their magic with their Sexy Fingers they managed to cut \$650M out of the project and reallocated it to the Roads Lobby, ensuring that it is now one huge white elephant.

1. They cut the new flyover at Southern Cross causing the ensuing wheel debacle.
2. They cut the new flyover at Sunshine.
3. They cut the new flyover at Deer Park West.
4. Did not remove three level crossings between Sunshine and Deer Park West.
5. Did not relocate Sunshine station leaving a ridiculous 40 Km/H Curve in and out of the station.
6. Removed Bi-Directional running from Sunshine to Deer Park West.
7. Cut Bi-Directional running from Deer Park Junction to Manor Junction.

When they rescope public works like this there should be an act of parliament enforcing an analysis of the impact the cost cutting will have on the project and if it is found to be wrong than people should be held to account.

What actually occurs is Engineers, Accountants and Politicians connive to deliver a project on time and under budget for short term political gain.



My Opinion only.

Metro and V/Line.

It would appear that Metro is trying to position itself as the only alternative to operate all passenger trains in Victoria by not allowing some V/Line trains to operate in the Metropolitan Area due to a suspect claim that Vlocity trains don't trigger level crossings in particular Progress Street at Dandenong.

I don't know what Metro thinks now after their misadventure at Merri the other week with a derailment of a train and a track machine later on sent to fix the track or there security issues at Hurstbridge.

I think the government should take a good hard look at MTR with a view to refranchising Metro to V/Line.

MTR are just appear greedy and incompetent beyond belief well that's my opinion anyway, the sooner they're given the boot the better.



Xtrapolis Train Vandalism at Hurstbridge. Photo; The Age.

Vlocity Wheel Debacle.

I don't know much about it but I reckon it didn't happen overnight like VLP would have you believe.

I am pretty sure it was brewing for a while and was covered up in my opinion until it became so obvious that it could not be denied any further.

We had all seen iron filings in the track ruts in the yards and knew something was amiss and it turns out that due to the "Rescoping of the RRL Project" not building a new flyover at Spenner as originally planned plus the added bonus of not including grease pots on the curves was a recipe for disaster, a case of "Some of you may die, but it is a risk I am prepared to take".

Seems the \$650M saved will be spent fixing the latest disaster to befall V/Line.

Management For Management's Sake.

How did VLP end up with so many managers? When the Libs rolled former CEO Rob Barnett and other experienced managers who seemed to actually know what they were doing and replaced them

with rank outsiders who seemed to think that effective management is to piss people off with inane decisions that beggar belief.

We now have at the top executive managers on top of general managers on top of managers on top of supervisors, next everyone will have there own personal manager at huge cost to the tax payer.

A bad manager can take a good staff and destroy it, causing the best employees to flee and the remainder to lose all motivation.

Southern Cross Drivers Depot we now have three managers instead of one with no believable explanation as to why as well as a similar number at Training and Compliance.

We have a V/Line Manager whose answer to everything is to stick Drivers on a code of conduct,



I wonder how an FOI application would go to find out salaries and the reason for the establishment of a Petty Mindless Bureaucracy that would make the Vogons in The Hitch Hikers Guide to the Galaxy envious, although you wouldn't know to look at a Vagon as they're already green.

Staff Morale.

I have never known morale on the Railways to be so low that people are contemplating working interstate and overseas as a viable option.

This harkens back to the 1990s and 2000s when chronic Driver shortages led The Met, Connex, M>Train and V/Line to actively contact Drivers who had been declared redundant by the Kennett Government to shore up the numbers.

During the Commonwealth Games V/Line Crews were drafted into Connex to help run all the extra services required by this special event, it wasn't cheap either as the incentive payments and expenses paid to country Crews was staggering. If the Daniels Government is not careful it could find itself staring into a full on Public Transport disaster and associated political wilderness.

Parliamentary Enquiries and Royal Commissions.



Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption

Well the Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption was a fizzer with numerous CFMEU officials charged with various offences either to be later dropped, discontinued or overturned by a court of competent jurisdiction and then there was the Legislative Council of Victoria Parliamentary Enquiry into V/Line and Metro stacked with Libs more interested that scoring points off the Labour Government that holding Metro and VLP to account. The Libs must all think we were born yesterday.



It's Every Drivers Mago. Remember it's your Mago too so write in on any relevant subject you like. See ya later, Drive!

Have

your

Say!

V/line professionals

By now, those of you working for The Rabble (Formerly V/Line, and now a wholly incestuous partner of Metro) would be aware that a Dunce backed down on the shorts issue this summer only. He has stated that the new uniform will not have shorts, as it is inconsistent with the “professionalism and standards” we are striving to achieve at V/Line. I suppose signals and level crossings obscured by trees in 160 kph areas, Selleys “No more gaps” on platform coping and platforms not long enough for all trains are consistent with a railway striving for “professionalism and standards”.

I can't make this s**t up,
it's all real.
Name Withheld



PN at it again

PN have done it again, this time managing to lose the Boral cement contract and the apex. This has now lead to more redundancies, 14 across Victoria. This is 5 from Dynon, 4 from Geelong and 5 scid's, 2 from Dynon and 3 from Western Victoria. In the explanation they have made it blatantly clear that they won't carry deadwood [sorry off-task liabilities, according to the GM]. Lose a contract and more redundancies are sure to follow. By the end of February all 14 will be gone and on to other operators. The loss of talent, experience and knowledge will be the undoing of the current crop of accountant/managers.

But all is fine in PN land because the casuals will come to the rescue for any crew shortages. But wait some casuals have already left for greener pastures.



For some reason PN management can't understand, people need more than 3 shifts a month to live and can't wait by the phone praying for it to ring. No worries though they'll just train up another 20 or so casuals to replace those that have moved on. No doubt, the moved on casuals are all thanking PN for the training, recognised qualifications and experience as they ply their trade in competing rail companies.

All this from a company that doesn't want to be a training company for its competitors. How can they fix this mmm...? Maybe permanent/part time might be an option. No this is no option it will give the staff too much security, it'll cost too much all that long service leave and sick leave liabilities, after all it only takes 3 months to get them up to standard and out. No let's keep them sitting by the phone and praying for it to ring.

What else are they there for?

Richard Guest
Redundant driver
No longer at PN Geelong



Armadale Retaining Wall - pics 'R' us...!

10km/h speed limit.....? Adjacent track CLOSED 'til further notice? "Givvus gutzfuls of feckin' munney and we'll pretend to fix it for the twenty seventh time.....!"

Just in from wunner the spize, of wunner me spize,.....
Seems like the surveying & maintenance of the infrastructure in the hands (for the time being) of the greatest 3rd World Railway Operator in the known f*****g universe might be a bit 2nd hand!

"Reckon this'll make Jacinta choke on her Corn Flakes! Just in from wunner me field operatives, and I quote: "I think I've just closed the Caulfield locals down for a while." The retaining wall on the down side of Armadale has been developing a peculiar bulge over the last few days, and one of our other chaps booked it with Metrol this afternoon. There was apparently stunned silence at the end of the phone for a minute while the significance of what "our man" said sank in.

Remember your foray into geotech at Rosanna a few years ago? Small potatoes compared to this looming stuff up.

The absolute gem in all of this was Metrol ringing the driver concerned back about half an hour later to confirm it was him who rang. "Yeah it was" said he. Seems the bloke in Metrol has the same dim view of Metro as the rest of us and basically told our man "well done".

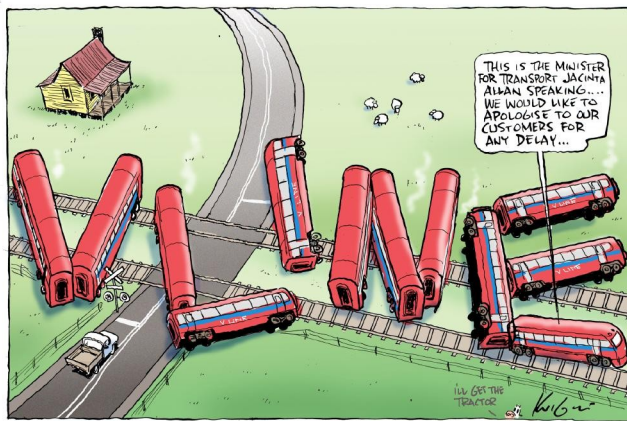
Allies in the most unlikely places sometimes.....

Dear Daniel, Jacinta and Vicki,

It has been mentioned at work that not only does Sunstone still exist which has possible links to the family of our CEO but now rumour has it that the same person has set up a company to distribute Uniforms and stores to staff. Please would you inquire into whether this is in fact correct and advise me if this is accepted practice.

Surely there is enough evidence now of graft, corruption and deceit within the company running Metro trains to ensure that they do not get the franchise back again.

It is interesting that claims have been made that tracks are greased daily when in fact this is completely untrue. As I pointed out to Vicki in a discussion recently, during the V/Line fiasco, three derailments have occurred under Metro's watch, grease pots around the network were in many cases disconnected from the track and not operating. To make claims that this necessary maintenance had always been done since MTM took over is a falsehood.



I also understand that during EBA negotiations you became aware that mistruths were being peddled by MTM Management concerning agreements reached between them and the RTBU. This should ring alarm bells when even the Government is being deliberately misled.

I must point out that if MTM are awarded an extension to their current contract, Labor will lose hundreds if not thousands of votes at the ballot box. There is not one person I am aware of in all areas of Metro apart from Management who has any respect for or supports the

underhanded, bullying tactics of this Company. The old saying a happy workforce is a productive workforce comes to mind. Let me assure you that no-one in the Metro workforce is happy at present and goodwill has never been at such a low level. It is hard to take any pride in an organisation which deliberately sets out to stand over staff, deceive the public Government and employees and make claims about running an excellent service!

Name Withheld



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By: Mick Welch.
Heritage Crew Pool coordinator

ICE radio equipment

With the introduction of ICE radio and with the requirement for all trains to be operating in the network to be equipped with ICE radio has presented the requirement for it to be fitted to heritage rolling stock. With a \$250,000 budget the initial option was to look at a more feasible Hi Rail version with half the operating redundancies still in design/test stage.

With the prospect for ICE radio to receive electronic safe working orders/authorities has made the full ICE radio the only option. This has presented the challenges of the number of units to be made available, fitting of the large CCU, and the cab HMI and CCU units being portable. On steam locomotives it is believed the turbo with a battery reserve is sufficient to power the radio and with the prospect of portability we have always made our position clear that we want in cab fixed speakers and fist mic's as a fix to the problems experienced with the current radio equipment.

Training

With the completion of the amended heritage courseware V/Line put in an application to the Victorian Training and Qualification Authority to deliver heritage competency units. Driver trainee candidates Trevor Penn and Dave Richards have now started are the first to be enrolled by V/Line's RTO, and when they have completed their training they will receive a statement of attainment for industry recognised competency units.

Ongoing training has been the steam fireman with the last candidate to complete his training early this year and a DERM class of 6 candidates commenced in 2015 that is still on going.

We desperately need more trainers. For this to happen trainers may require training funded by the amount left in the heritage crew training fund or the training levy. Looking towards V/Line for assistance. Our problem is that V/Line as the operator recommended it is was far better to use V/Line recruiting to keep it all open, fair, honest etc. Well we are still waiting for this to happen, and this long wait is not helping.

Routes not cover by the V/Line passenger network (goods lines) is an area we have been required to train in, to give preservation groups more options outside the passenger network for a destination. This has required members with previous known/recorded primary corridor qualification to be trained or in the case of a secondary corridor viewing using a hi-rail.

Locomotives

After 50 years an A2 steam locomotive is planned to be returned to preservation service. This has started with a test light engine trial between Newport and Sunshine. An axel box on the locomotive bogie and the bottom rail on the crosshead ran hot requiring a further test run with crosshead bottom rail still a problem. When the light engine tests are completed a test train to Geelong or Bacchus Marsh will be run at a later date.

The locomotive itself is just like a D3 with Walschaert valve gear with the operating controls and equipment same as the D3 and K. The only differences are a long narrow firebox, an additional ashpan hopper, and a different arrangement for the reverser lifting arm/link on the valve gear. For train crew to operate a written description maybe sufficient to sign off in these variances and we need to make sure that there is nothing else with the running of the test train before committing to this.

R711 on the other hand. Having no previous requirement to crew an oil burner. No recorded evidence of training. No training material. Variance in equipment as compared to the description in the brown book. Required training material has been developed and has now entered service with crew members being trained in its operation.

Tait train

There is a suburban Tait train in preservation. It is required to go through accreditation process, complete the training material as far as breakdowns etc., and sign off as relevant to rolling stock.

The train itself will be crewed by METRO members. Anyone interested?

Retirements

2014 has seen the retirement of Brian Eaton and resignation of Lindsay Walker. For a long time both Brian and Lindsay have been the mainstay and support for steam locomotive training and I wish them the best in their retirement.

Committee

The crew pool committee is Steve Cox, Craig Haber, Darren Wood, Dave Richards, Trevor Penn, and Andrew Johnson. Barry Lloyd our METRO member is planning to retire and has worked hard on the Tait courseware.

Anyone with questions on what we are doing, where we are going feel free to contact a committee member.



RTBU LD Heritage Committee

Metro Representative Expressions of Interest

The RTBU Victorian Locomotive Division Heritage Committee invites expressions of interest from current **METRO** RTBU Locomotive Division members to join the RTBU LD Heritage committee.

The Heritage committee coordinates the rostering, training and general operations regarding crews operating heritage Steam, Diesel and Electric rail services by the 4 main line heritage groups.

Please direct your EOI in writing or via email to :

Heritage Committee Coordinator

c/o the RTBU Loco Division Office, Level 6, 1 Elizabeth St, Melbourne.

Email: reception@rtbuvicloco.com.au

Closing Date: **6 May 2016**

Should you have any questions please contact:

Mick Welch: 0429 949 835

Steven Cox: 0402 477 607

RETIREMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS



Dear Marc,

After being offered a package from Pacific National which I decided to take, I will be resigning from the union as of 3/3/16. I would like to thank all the officials over the 36 years that have helped me & wish all members the very best & remember to keep up the fight.

Regards

Keith Porter Driver S.D.L

Marc

As I have retired from Pacific National, as a driver after 45 years,

I would like to resign from the union.

I thank everyone for their help over the years and wish you and the union all the best in the future.

Regards

Wayne Thomas (Junior)

Driver trainer

Maryborough

I wish to give notice, as I am retiring from Metro, of my resignation from the Union from 27/2/2016.

I wish to thank the union and members for all their assistance over the years.

Yours Sincerely

David Cook

To whom it may concern

Due to my sacking mid 2015 I must regretfully resign my membership with the Loco division of the RTBU. I would like to thank the union for the work they put in over the years that resulted in the conditions I enjoyed in my 10 years of service, and I wish the union the best in your negotiations in the future

Yours

Ian Smith

I wish to cancel my VIC RTBU membership please. I am joining the NSW's RTBU as 6 months ago I had to transfer from Dimboola VIC to now Enfield/ Sydney. Thanking You All for your expertise over the years,

PS one day I hope to come back to VIC on V/Line etc

Thanking you

John Wayne Turnbull

It's with reluctance and regret that as of 1/2/2016 I will be resigning from the PTULD.

I thank you all for your help over the past 40yrs but because I was unable to receive any other positions as a driver since being made redundant it must be time to retire.

Thankyou hope to catch up sometime
R Clugston



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, Trainee 2 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.