



LocoLines

NEWSLETTER FOR LOCOMOTIVE
ENGINEMEN OF THE RTBU VIC

Edition No. 68 • APR 2017

48 hr STRIKE!

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Metro Charged

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LOCOLINES
EDITION 68 APR 2017

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Publisher
Marc Marotta

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Locomotive Division Representatives

Divisional Executive

Secretary:Marc Marotta 0414 897 314
Assist. Sec: ...Jim Chrysostomou 0404 814 141
President:Wayne Hicks 0407 035 282
Vice Pres:John Marotta: 0414 864 702

Divisional Councillors

Metropolitan :Paris Jolly 0422 790 624
Metropolitan :
Metropolitan :
Metropolitan :
V/line Pass.:Howard Hand 0447 841 206
V/line Pass.:Matt Billman 0400 245 195
PN Bulk:Cathy Noone 0477 453 147
PN Intermodal:

RTBU-LD Level 6, 1 Elizabeth St Melbourne Victoria 3000
Ph: 03 9682 1122 Toll Free: 1800 134 095 Fax: 03 9682 3344
Email: reception@rtbuvicloco.com.au Web: www.rtbuvicloco.com.au



SECRETARY'S REPORT

By Marc Marotta
Divisional Secretary

PACIFIC NATIONAL ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS Protected Action Ballot Order

The RTBU Locomotive Division has been negotiating with Pacific National Rural and Bulk (PN R&B) for almost 12 months. The problem has been that PN R&B believe that whatever proposal they put forward should be accepted. The Locomotive Division has advised PN R&B that it was bargaining in good faith but that does not mean we will accept or agree with items that are detrimental to our memberships pays and conditions.

On February 17 2017 PN R&B presented a document titled 'Pacific National Bulk Rail Victorian Enterprise Agreement 2017' and advised the Locomotive Division that it was the only document that they wished to discuss. The Locomotive Division advanced the proposition that the current agreement *Pacific National Victoria Bulk Rail Enterprise Agreement 2014* was the applicable enterprise agreement and should be the base in which negotiations should evolve, which is the clear message from our membership.

Whilst the Locomotive Division has always, and continues to, negotiate in good faith, there still remains some fundamental differences regarding the PN R&B ultimatum presented on 17/2/17.

The Locomotive Division objects strongly to the misleading and self serving representations state wide made by PN R&B management intended to dupe our members.

The tables that were produced purport to show greater earning capacity under PN R&B's new pay structure are in fact a pay cut to locomotive drivers of \$6.64 per hour. PN R&B also purposes the cutting of the fortnightly guarantee from 80 hours to 76 hours. This equates to a loss of 4 hours at \$52.71 per hour for loco drivers = \$210.84 per fortnight when the industry is not busy, and normal hours are worked.

If that is calculated over a 12 month period with hourly rate and guarantee reduction of 2 hours per week, a total pay cut of \$19,293.00 per annum when work slows down for a loco driver.

The next fundamental divide between the Locomotive Division and PN R&B is their proposal of Home Regions. Home Regions are multiple sign on locations within an area. There are five Home Regions in one region. The variations in distance to travel is as much as 120km.

In PN R&B's ultimatum document drivers will travel in their own time and not paid be paid, and will use their private vehicles at their own expense. This has been vehemently rejected by our members.

After feedback from our members, the Locomotive Division made an application to the Fair Work Commission for a Protected Action Ballot (PABO) which was approved on 8/2/17. The PABO that was conducted by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) asked members to endorse 16 protected industrial action items. The AEC published the results of the PABO:

96.7% of the members voted to take Protected Action. The result is protected action commenced on 22/3/17.

A 48 hour starting on 27/3/17.

A 24 hour strike on 31/3/17.

The Locomotive Division has advised PN R&B of their intention to take a further 8 different forms of protected industrial action that will be taken if no progress is made in the negotiations with PN R&B.

Metro charged : Are they fit to run our public transport?

In unprecedented action against any previous public transport franchise holder, Metro Trains Melbourne (MTM) has been charged with two breaches of the Rail Safety Act 2006. Previously the Locomotive Division has prosecuted MTM legally over safety breaches, although MTM had contended that it was safe to put trains into service without working headlight and tail lights at night.

In a serious collision that occurred between a V/line train and a Metro train, the Metro train was disabled because of a fault on the train and the V/Line train had consequently collided into the back of the Metro train. The V/line driver suffered injuries.

The Locomotive Division is of the firm belief that MTM's cavalier attitude towards safety was the major contributor to this accident as the Metro train did not have working tail lights on the rear of the train. The Locomotive Division was able to retrieve the fault history on the Metro train in the above incident and found that the Metro train had been reported with no working tail lights for three days and had not been repaired prior to the collision.

MTM is always sensitive to publicity (especially at state election time) when it reveals its true stance to safety; so when the Locomotive Division's separate prosecution of MTM was scheduled two weeks after the V/Line collision, MTM sought to settle the matter out of court three days prior to the start of the case. The Locomotive Division forced MTM into cancelling its dangerous practice of putting trains into service without safe illumination of working head and tail lights at night.

The Heyington charges

MTM's form is to announce publically its deep and profound commitment to safety but in reality it is something different. This brings us to the Heyington incident which has led to the charges being made against MTM. The charges are:

- MTM Failed to ensure the safety of its rail infrastructure operation
- MTM failed to ensure safety of its rolling stock operation.

The Locomotive Division maintain that it is appropriate that MTM should be brought to account over the Heyington incident, but there are a number of locations around the Metro system that require MTM to address the failing infrastructure. The Locomotive Division has advised MTM of the hazards at other locations that have a history of incidents which have been ignored thus far, Williamstown Beach Station is one that comes to mind. The only difference is that no one has been killed there yet and until someone is, MTM will continue to ignore the situation.

MTMs commitment to safety

Cutting corners is the best description of MTMs commitment to maintenance of track infrastructure. The derailment at Rushall last year can be directly attributed to MTMs decision to stop regular maintenance on track infrastructure. Drivers were reporting that track lubricator that were being removed were being left on the side of the track and not serviced until rail wheel wear, including at V/line, in a number of locations became a public issue and repeated derailments led to a government inquiry. MTMs reaction was to hurriedly reinstall the track lubricators. We were then subjected to the performance from MTM boss, C.E.O Mr Lazala, making statements that the derailments were not caused by MTMs over lubrication of the tracks. "*The fact is it was caused by no lubricator...*". He was allowed to get away with this nonsense statement.

Furthermore, at the time of writing, the Locomotive Division has filed an application in the Australian Federal Court against MTM for the failure of delivery of safety training to drivers. The matter is due to commence on 28th March 2017. It is another example of MTM's genuine commitment to safety training which is prescribed in the Enterprise Agreement and that now requires the Locomotive Division to take MTM to court in order to honour their safety training commitment.

MTMs track record with its employees

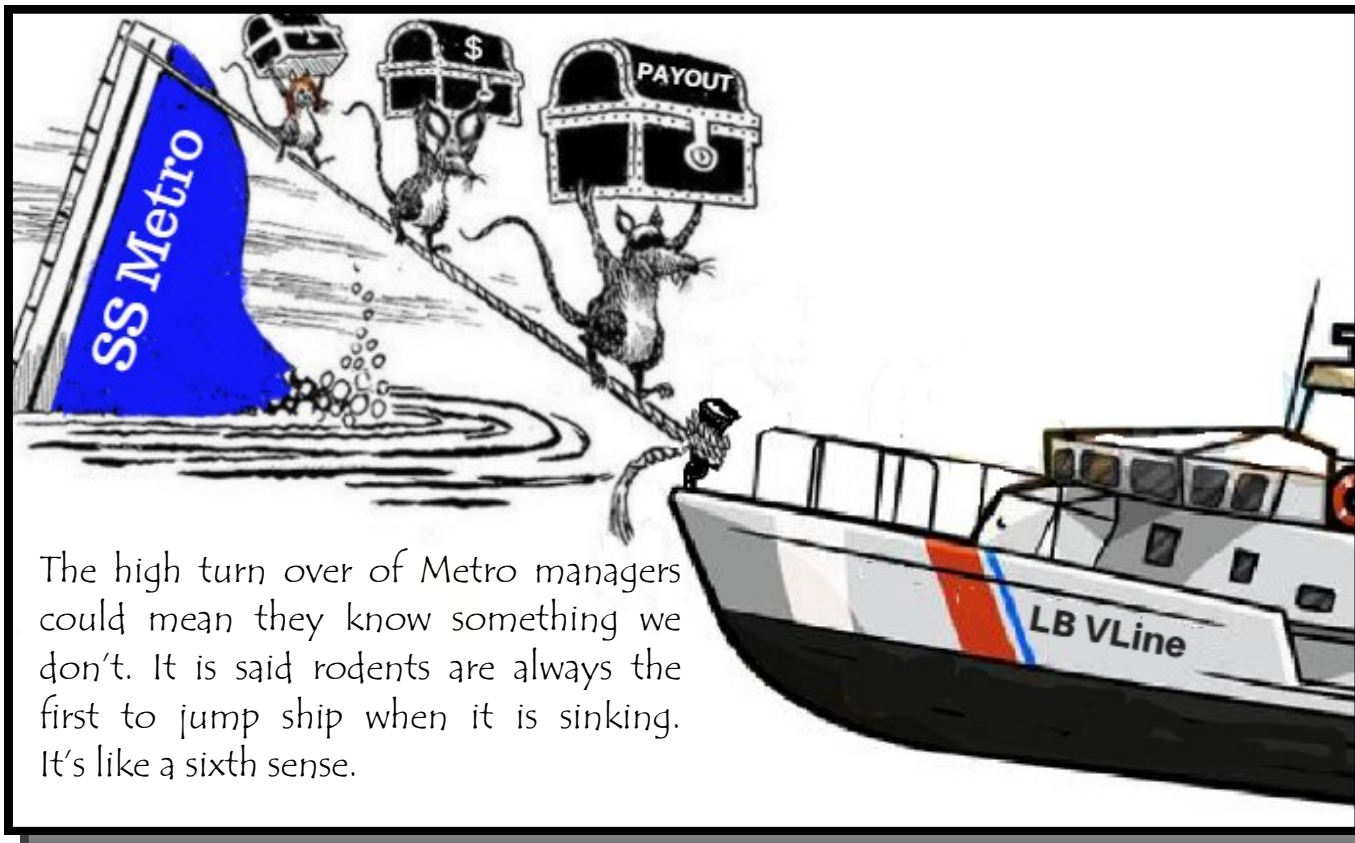
MTM has been judged to be harsh, unjust, unreasonable and unfair in two significant decisions in the Fair Work Commission (FWC).

The Locomotive Division was asked for advice from two members of the Operations Division about their treatment, or more correctly the bullying, at the hands of MTM management and their subsequent termination of employment by MTM.

The Locomotive Division gave these members copies of the industrial agreement and made them aware of the applicable clauses to their situations and provided them with referrals to Maurice Blackburn lawyers.

MTM was embarrassingly defeated in both cases and were ordered to reinstate both employees and to pay back pay. This is unusual as unfair dismissal cases are rarely successful and is an indictment against MTM's conduct.

On any measure the question of whether MTM is fit to run Victorian public transport, the resounding answer is NO.



The high turn over of Metro managers could mean they know something we don't. It is said rodents are always the first to jump ship when it is sinking. It's like a sixth sense.

QUBE

The long and torturous journey of combining three different Enterprise Agreements into one new agreement at QUBE Logistics was finally achieved with the approval of the Fair Work Commission on 3rd May 2017.

The members at QUBE will finally get their back pay .

Whilst the pay rises are modest at 3% per annum, the real improvements are in the rostering and when an employee is paid overtime.

Qube has been requested to address the standard of its amenities at North Dynon. A number of options have been floated which could include moving to Vic Dock or refurbishing the building at North Dynon.

QUBE has been advertising for train crew loco drivers and loco assistants.

It appears they are here to stay!



Continuation training– Metro Settles!

The RTBU Locomotive Division and Metro Trains Melbourne have reached a settlement in the matter of Metro's lack of compliance with the Enterprise Agreement obligations to deliver Continuation training

for Train Drivers. The fact that the Locomotive Division had to resort to a Federal Court application against Metro is indicative to their commitment to training, published below are the terms of settlement.

Terms of Settlement

The Australian Rail, Tram and Bus Industry Union (**RTBU**) is prepared to settle Federal Court proceeding VID 249 of 2017 (the **Court Proceeding**) it commenced against Metro Trains Melbourne Pty Ltd (**Metro**) on 14 March 2017 and Metro is prepared to settle the dispute resolution proceeding it commenced at the Fair Work Commission on 22 March 2017 (the **Commission Proceeding**) on the following basis:

1. Pursuant to cl 22 of Schedule 1 to the *Metro Rail Operations Enterprise Agreement 2015-2019* (the **Agreement**), Metro shall during the operation of the Agreement provide each Qualified Driver with at least 16 hours of Driver Development (Continuation Training) (the **Training**) for each year of the Agreement.
2. The Training shall be delivered during the life of the Agreement in 7 stages, each delivered as classroom or simulator based training. One stage of the Training may be allocated to training for Company and Government Initiatives as contemplated in the Agreement.
3. The content of the Training will comprise revision of, and development of, drivers' competencies, non-technical skills and human factors, safeworking systems, electrical multiple unit trains, train operating procedures and Metro policy and procedures.
4. By 30 June 2017, Metro shall provide each Qualified Driver with Stage 2 training in accordance with Metro's "Driver Training Stage 2" 2016 handbook.
5. If Qualified Drivers are rostered for training, but make themselves unavailable, the non-completion of training will not be used against Metro to determine compliance with this agreement, or the terms of the Agreement. Reasonable attempts will be made by Metro to roster drivers who have missed training.
6. Once a Trainee Driver becomes a Qualified Driver, they will only be rostered to complete the next Stage of the Training, i.e. if they qualify in April and Metro is at the time delivering Stage 4 Driver Training, they will not be rostered to complete the Training until Metro is delivering Stage 5 Driver Training.
7. Except as stated at paragraph 4, above, there is no requirement for Metro to provide previous stages of Driver Training to newly qualified drivers, or Qualified Drivers who have been absent.
8. The RTBU shall consent to an adjournment of the Court Proceeding until 1 July 2017.
9. Metro shall consent to an adjournment of the Commission Proceeding until 1 July 2017.
10. Upon Metro complying with the obligations set out in paragraph 4 above:
 - (a) the RTBU shall seek a discontinuance of the Court Proceeding with no order as to costs;
 - (b) Metro shall seek a discontinuance of the Commission Proceeding with no order as to costs; and
 - (c) the parties shall release each other from any claims concerning a contravention of cl 22 of Schedule 1 to the Agreement for period between 29 December 2015 and 28 December 2016 with respect to any of the Train Drivers identified in the Amended Statement of Claim filed by the RTBU in the Court Proceeding on 26 April 2017.

HIGH CAPACITY METRO TRAINS PROJECT



In the next edition of LocoLines there will be a detailed report regarding some of the more ominous aspects of what has been proposed for the High Capacity trains.

Metro's Top Secret Strategy

The Locomotive Division office bearers have uncovered what could be a threat to the long term viability and tenure of trains drivers in the future.

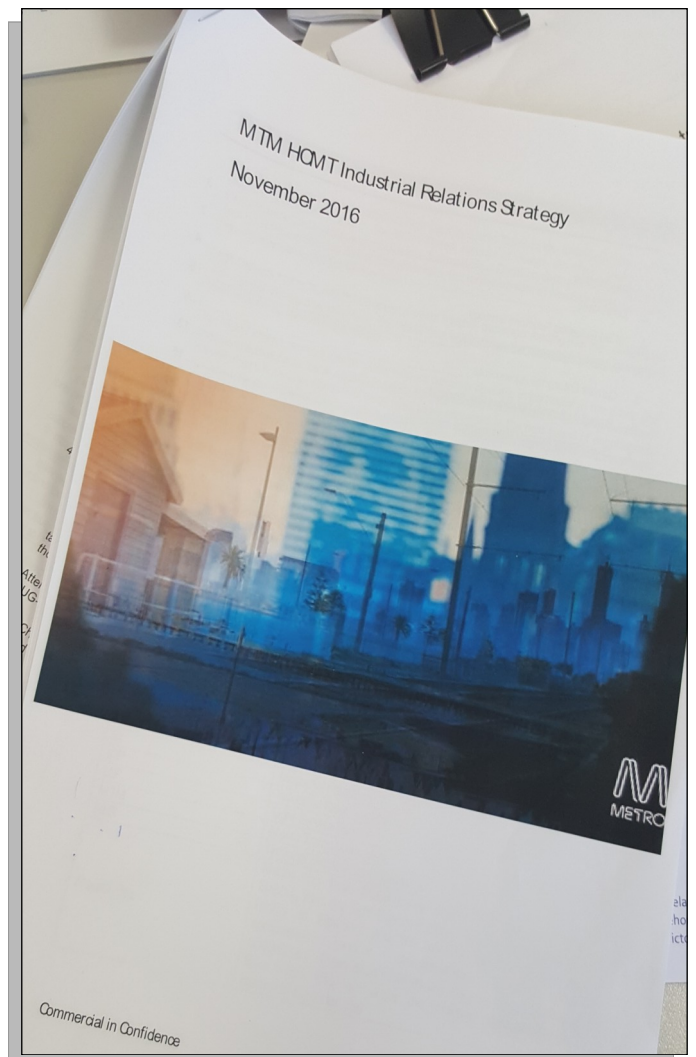
The High Capacity Metro Trains project report was produced by Public Transport Victoria that is often referred to in this office as just an extension of MTM (Metro Trains).

The document references train operators rather than train drivers and that's not the only concern in this report.

The union was able to access another document titled "MTM HCMT Industrial Relations Strategy" as this document has only been uncovered a day before writing this short report it is of great concern when on first reading of the document it stresses that the Union and the Industrial instrument is a problem for what MTM has planned for the future.

In recent discussions with members involved in the training area who were asked to sign a deed (contract) which swears them to secrecy for 15 years at the pain of prosecution if they do not maintain their silence, this secret contract was produced for only 15 of the new recruits applying for the position of training officers with MTM.

Please attend any future union meetings and read the next instalment of locolines which will have a more comprehensive and rounded appreciation of what our friends at Metro intend to do.





PRESIDENTIAL REPORT

By Wayne Hicks
Divisional President

Social Media warning

Social media is now part of main stream society, the pro's and con's regarding this medium can be debated. I wish to raise concerns of train crews taking to social media about work practice issues.

A caution to train crews: you should not be using social media profiles as train drivers for the company you work. This allows the company to bring individuals under scrutiny with the possibility of discussing the future of one's career. A reminder to be very mindful in using social media which could have ramifications.

V/Line

V/Locity Faults:

Vlocity's have agreed faults that may remain in service for a period of time, those defects that cannot run have the fitters and cars office asking crews to run the train knowing they are in contravention of the industrial agreement.

The faults I am talking about are auxiliary faults when it will be the leading or trailing unit and you have no heaters or cooling.

Defective toilets and the remaining usable toilet must be serviced prior to entering service, this has not been occurring.

Defective doors directly behind the driver on either end of a consist are not to run for safety reasons and is part of the agreed industrial agreement and your own liabilities should something go wrong.

Medicals:

Whilst in negotiations of the current agreement, management wanted train crews to have medicals in country locations as a cost saving measure. This was agreed to with the provision that people with ongoing medical reviews will still come to Melbourne.

The Union raised the issue that where an individual does not wish to have a medical in the country location they may come to Melbourne and this will mean you will travel to and from the county to

Melbourne in your own time. Only your time of the medical will be paid by the company.

Management have a different interpretation of what has been agreed and the Union is disputing management's interpretation. Managements view was not in the spirit of the discussions.

Final Warnings:

Train crews that have been placed on a final warning may request a review of a final warning no earlier than 2 years from the date of issue. Those in that unfortunate position please submit your application to the relevant manager to have your claim reviewed.

Excess Leave:

Train crews that have excess leave and years of long service leave have applied for additional leave although due to the acute shortage of train crews the leave applications have been knocked backed. In the current enterprise agreement (page 40 clause 42.4) it states that an Employee is entitled to take LSL at a particular time nominated by the employee by giving V/line at least **6 Months written notice, subject to an agreed quota to be managed locally.**

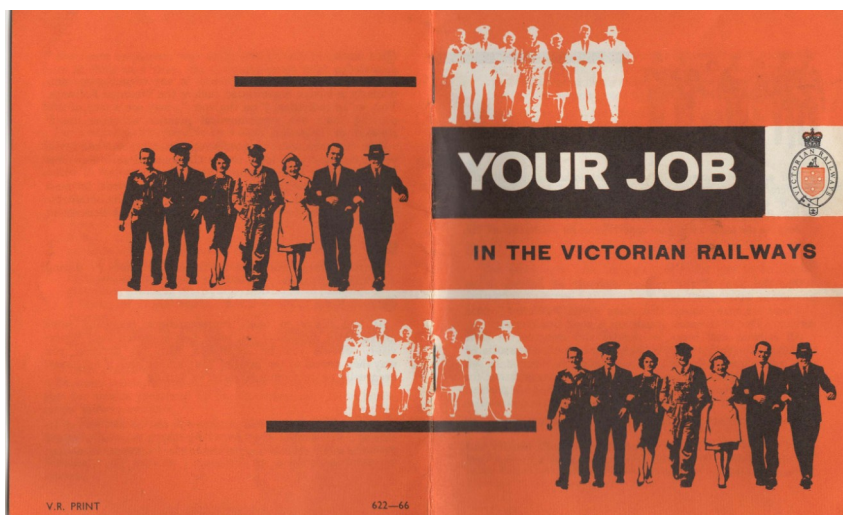
The length of written notice may be reduced by agreement between V/line and the Employee.

Train crews are already being rejected long service leave due to the shortage of crews.

Welcome—To the family of railway:

You are now employed in the largest industrial organisation in Victoria. It is an organisation that can function efficiently only if each other connected with it pulls his weight. That is one of the reasons why we call ourselves the family, or team. Because the team is big, your opportunities for promotion are big.

How times have changed through the industry with the fragmentation of the passenger services and freight has not provided a betterment of the railway as a whole.



The ZMF that had run around the Western district in the late eighties on wards were not too popular with the guards.





ASSISTANT SECRETARY REPORT

By Jim Chrysostomou
Divisional Assistant Secretary

Welcome to 'Metro Go'- the Smartphone project.

Metro Trains Melbourne have been recently promoting a Smartphone project under the pretence of a paperless network and assisting a Train Driver to flourish, prosper and thrive in their role.

Recently Metro distributed a Frequently Asked Questions (**FAQ**) notice in an attempt to alleviate any concerns the Driving Grade may have about Metro's motives. Below are three examples that have been interpreted by the highly skilled code breakers in the Union.

"Will 'Location Services' be turned on?"

Location Services allows us to realise the full potential of the app. GPS functionality is needed for various features such as in-running alerts. As part of the DUG [driver user group], we're reviewing the option of enabling Drivers to switch off location services when not on duty."

Code Broken: Yes, we will track your every move and conduct time and motion studies on the tasks you perform on any given day or every day if we don't like you. This may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

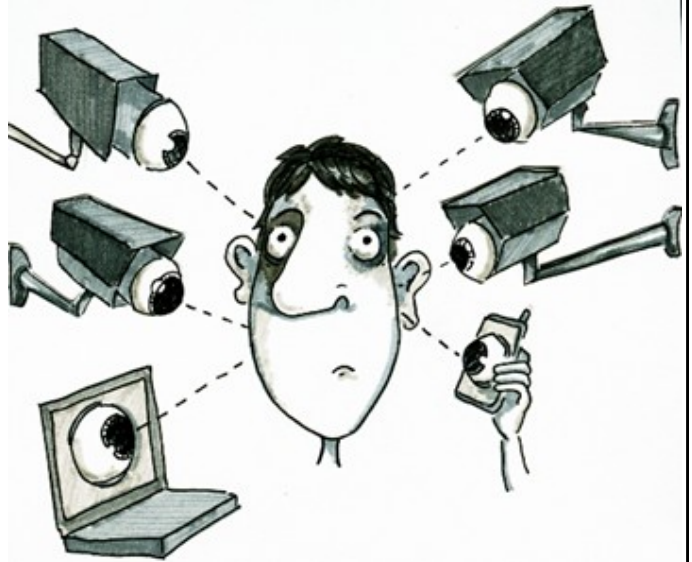
"What is Metro GO?"

Metro GO is mobile technology designed to help Metro employees succeed in their jobs. Train drivers are the first group of employees to be part of Metro GO. They will receive smartphones and an app aimed at providing them with the right information at the right time."

Code Broken: Metro Go is a project designed to assist MTM in succeeding in every hair brain reactive strategy they can think of.

"Are you able to track what I'm doing on the phone or access my personal data?"

We are all protected under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic).



Our personal information can only be accessed in accordance with Metro's Privacy Policy.

This information is not monitored and will only be used during investigations as is the current situation. Accessing information for investigations requires specific criteria to be met and strict approvals from:

- *A safety investigation: CEO, Deputy CEO or Director Safety, Environment and Risk*
- *Any other investigation: CEO*

With the roll-out of the new devices this does not change, information will continue to be securely kept and can only be accessed by authorised persons for authorised reasons."

Code Broken: Yes, we can track and monitor your every move and listen to your conversations. We can also use the information how we see fit. The use of this may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

The privacy act only protects individuals from unauthorised distribution of personal information to a third party. By accepting Metro's phone you accept Metros conditions.

Let's be proud of what Metro have achieved.

World's Best Practice – Infrastructure Maintenance



First Class Train Renewal Program



Innovation – Train Driver Training



Metro's commitment to Diversity Male / Female Facilities



Un-social Media

The Union has provided extensive guidance on the evils of social media but unfortunately members continue to make posts that result in some form of repercussions for the individuals concerned.

I will endeavour to offer some additional advice.

Every organisation has a code of conduct or policy on how they expect members to reasonably behave, these policies or procedures also apply in the written context (i.e. social media posts). What must be considered in the employment relationship is that any type of adverse behaviour during or outside working hours has the potential to jeopardise your employment.

In the rail industry there have been several employees that have been disciplined for inappropriate social media posts. The outcomes have ranged from letters of

expected behaviour, formal warnings, final warnings and unfortunately termination.

I would encourage anyone that uses social media to expresses views or opinions to first consider how the posts could be read, understood and if the comments made are reflective of a reasonable person or organisation. Any outcomes will not be swayed if the post was made because you were tired, emotional or inebriated.

If you have an issue or concern that needs to be resolved I would either talk to the individual directly or include a third party to assist e.g. the Union. Otherwise any words posted for the sake of it usually result in tears from the author.

Leaked Employee Memo.

I recently came into possession of an internal document to employees from a prominent rail operator that explains in some detail management and the direction training has taken.

TO: All Employees

From: Management

Subject: Special High Intensity Training

In order to assure the highest levels of quality work and productivity from employees, it will be our policy to keep all employees well trained through our program of Special High Intensity Training (S.H.I.T.). We are trying to give employees more S.H.I.T. than anyone else.

If you feel that you do not receive your share of S.H.I.T. on the job, please see your manager. You will be immediately placed at the top of the S.H.I.T. list, and our managers are especially skilled at seeing that you get all the S.H.I.T. you can handle.

Employees who don't take their S.H.I.T. will be placed in Departmental Employee Evaluation Programs (D.E.E.P S.H.I.T.). Those who fail to take D.E.E.P. S.H.I.T. seriously will have to go to Employee Attitude Training (E.A.T. S.H.I.T.). Since our managers took S.H.I.T. before they were promoted, they don't have to do S.H.I.T. anymore, and are all full of S.H.I.T. already.

If you are full of S.H.I.T., you may be interested in a job training others. We can add your name to our Basic Understanding Lecture List. (B.U.L.L. S.H.I.T.).

Those who are full of B.U.L.L. S.H.I.T. will get the S.H.I.T. jobs, and can apply for a promotion to Director of Intensity Programming (D.I.P. S.H.I.T.).

If you have further questions, please direct them to our Head Of Training, Special High Intensity Training (H.O.T.S.H.I.T.).

Thank you,

Boss In General, Special High Intensity Training (B.I.G. S.H.I.T.)



SOUTHERN CROSS REPORT

By Howard Hand
Secretary Southern Cross Sub Branch

Welcome Trainees

Firstly I would like to welcome the new trainees who have joined our ranks; you have certainly come to the right place for a very rewarding career with great benefits, wages and conditions.

These wages and conditions have been fought for over decades of industrial battles and didn't just happen, it is something we as the Locomotive Division are very proud of.

We wish you all the best with your training and look forward to you all becoming part of a proud and dedicated group of Locomotive Drivers at Vline.



VLocity Rollout

The Vlocity roll out continues with 64 being the latest to enter service. With 75 the current number of units in total this should make a dramatic impact on regional services you would think! Time will tell as extra services usually means reduced capacity this seems to be the game plan and as the complaints that follow every time table change is showing.



Employee Safety

Safety around the Southern Cross environs is still very much an ongoing issue with some matters going back years. One current issue that has been a concern for months now is the lack of water pressure in the car

sidings due to damaged water pipes during infrastructure improvements. We are still waiting for the resurfacing which should have been done before Christmas 2016.

They all talk the talk but when requests have been made for the tabling of a report concerning an asbestos audit conducted 26/02/2016 on the tunnel under SCS and the recommendations made, could it be possible that either no inspection was ever undertaken or it was so bad it's been lost.



Let's not forget the Bio wash, this little gem has had a general waste dumper full of rotting animal carcasses and who knows what else sitting in the sun for weeks in the middle of summer. This issue had to be raised once again by train crews. Yet those responsible for managing this site are not held to account for failure to abide by Vline procedures or Government health regulations. This is a "Bio Wash" and you would think some standard hygiene practices are followed but no, we get an email back saying next time "WE" report it could we include photo's, WTF!



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V/LINE STRANDED GAUGE!

By Charles Szeligiewicz

V/line Member report

So what's right with the standard gauge?

Well lets have a look at this ARTC asset, managed by an organisation biased towards freight movement rather than passenger trains. As you will all be aware, the broad gauge was closed in 2008, announced as a nation building project and standardised to create a wonderful asset that all Australian's should be proud of. The blurb went on about efficiencies of freight movements blah, blah, blah!

The eventual outcome was to be an experiment in cost savings at the risk to the asset, by side insertion practice of re-sleeping.

The corridor reopened in 2011 to triumphant praise from the state Transport Minister as well as local politicians who came along for the ride. The late Trevor Kruger, (driver of the first return down service to Albury), invited the minister of Transport to come into the locomotive cabin to see for himself this masterpiece of ARTC railway engineering. Trevor ran the train at full speed, 115Km/hr from Seymour to Avenel. The Minister's comment anecdotally to Trevor was,

"This is an absolute disgrace!"

After leaving the cab he spoke with ARTC representatives to which I am not privy to what was discussed.

Lets fast-forward approximately 6 years to today. What has changed with ARTC's standard gauge? Basically nothing! The amount of track geometric issues, poor ride characteristics, mud holes, poor ballast as well as out of control foliage is ridiculous and slowly getting worse. I have had many engineers travel with myself and Mr Gary Brauman (Driver based at Albury), at the bequest of V/line management and the same story appears every time, the engineers comments typically are:

- The beast is too big,
- nothing wrong with the ride characteristic,
- it is just bloody minded V/line drivers complaining again,
- look at our pie charts and graphs they tell us nothing is wrong, it has never been so good etc.

Sure, some drivers are prepared to run trains on time always getting the job done. How can this be achieved if there are 23 speed restrictions as well as V/line's own imposed restrictions to protect there own staff?

A meeting was arranged some years ago at Albury to discuss with drivers the problems encountered in the

corridor. During the meeting an Ex senior ARTC representative stated;

"Yes we know we stuffed the track but ARTC will never admit to this".

The on-going problems I encounter every shift are wearing myself and every one else thin. The number of drivers who comment to me that the track is ridiculously rough, my response is usually "Did you book it?" The answer is normally "NO!" So they leave it up to the few others to book the problems, protesting let them stick their heads up... Give me a break!

Frustration at ARTC's lack of attention to maintenance is further exacerbated when only a few are prepared to book a fault! Do us a favour, book the track fault with control rather than having a go at the few who actually do the right thing.

There was a planned shutdown in early March for three days to fix all the problems with the corridor. Every twelve months they have a window of 2 or 3 days to fix all the track issues under restriction. Usually by tamping contaminated ballast back into the road bed. Hey presto, it all looks good again and another twelve months of slow deterioration before ARTC comes back and does the same thing again.

Add to this the number of broken axel boxes, brake pistons falling off bogies, brake blocks missing, faults never encountered on N Class locomotives before, and injured on train staff including drivers begs the question; What is the common denominator here? It's the substandard, third world, minimally maintained track!

If management is really fair dinkum about the standard gauge and its poor characteristics then I suggest the following: When the Federal Minister for Transport requests a ride to view the North Eastern standard gauge, ask him to view the RRL to Ballarat, Bendigo or Geelong. Surely there will be some political interest as all politicians seem interested in marginal seats. This would allow the Hon Darren Chester to see how the track should have been done and maybe, just maybe, he will start to ask for a proper and full explanation of this experiment from ARTC!

So in summary—What's right with the standard gauge?

NOT MUCH!



A tram crosses an offshoot of the far-flung Victorian Railways empire in early 1956. But “Where Is It ...?”

THE previous *Where Is It ...?* [below] was Mirboo North. The photo was taken by Des Jowett. This time our only winner who correctly guessed the location was Geoff Brown from V/Line at Bendigo. Congratulations go to Geoff.

Meanwhile if you think you know the location of the photograph on the *OPPOSITE* page, call the Union

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

Good luck!

MIRBOO NORTH

Mirboo North, right, was the terminus of the 20 mile [30 km] branch line that went south-west from Morwell in central Gippsland. The line opened throughout in 1886. In later times there was a passenger service provided by a Walker railcar, seen here. This was withdrawn in 1968 and the line closed in mid 1974 partly due to the imminent extension of the SEC's Morwell open cut.



Meanwhile at Morwell, looking in the down direction, 153 hp Walker 24RM has arrived from Mirboo North late one afternoon. It will probably wait to connect with up and down mainline services before returning to Mirboo North for the night. This shot of the blue and silver railcar in its original livery was taken on gorgeous Kodachrome slide film during the early 1950s, before the Gippsland electrification reached Morwell and Traralgon from Moe in 1956. PHOTO BY NOEL REED



"A SPECIAL TRAIN IN HALF-AN-HOUR"

By Trevor Penn edited by Warren Banfield
(Passenger Sub-division)

WE LIFTED this gem, reproduced below, from the December 1925 issue of *The Victorian Railways Magazine*, a house journal which was first published in January 1924. The article has no by-line but the writing style is that of its editor and major contributor, Richard Hughes.

Retailing at railway bookstalls for sixpence a copy (but free to VR employees) the magazine provided a feast of reading matter with topics ranging from *Why My Job Is Important* and *Things We Are Talking About* to fiction stories and a page of handy cleaning hints and recipes; so useful for the Little Woman at home. In September 1930 production was terminated "due to the grave financial position with which all of

us are confronted". The Depression era substitute for this lavish magazine, which often ran to well over 50 glossy pages, copiously endowed with photos and sketches, was a sad little single sheet *Newsletter*, folded in two. It was intended to "partly fill the breach" left by the discontinuation of "the excellent little (?!) journal whose place it will, we hope, but temporarily occupy".

"Temporary" things can last for an awfully long time. After a mere 18 years a change of editor coincided with a return to glossy paper and *The VR News Letter* began to morph into the well-illustrated format that many of our more senior members would fondly remember.

The Victorian Railways
Magazine, December, 1925.

A Special Train in Half-an-Hour

Although seven to fourteen days notice is required when a special is desired for a picnic or a race meeting, half-an-hour is more than sufficient to arrange the running of a special train in Victoria in the case of emergency. Here's an insight into the arrangements that have to be made, and the precautions to be taken before a special be scheduled.

HOLDING a travelling bag in one hand and breathing heavily, Mr. Herbert Potter scuttled excitedly across the crowded concourse at Spencer-street, elbowed his way to the barrier, hustled past the ticket-checker, and charged frantically into the open—just in time to see the van of the 4.30 p.m. Adelaide express clear the platform.

To Mr. Potter's heated imagination, it seemed as though the guard's green flag fluttered derisively at him, while the shrewd observation of a genial, quick-witted bystander—

"Just missed it, eh?"—moved him to the verge of an apoplectic fit.

Relieving his feelings somewhat by pushing a newsboy out of the way, Potter accosted the ticket-checker and inquired what time the next train to Adelaide departed.

The blunt reply that there would be no other train until next day was so obviously a staggering blow for the luckless traveller that the checker was constrained to add doubtfully that a special train could be arranged if Mr. Potter was willing to pay for it. *[continued over page]*

OPPOSITE, TOP: Spare engines were not just utilised for running a Special Train with short notice. One sunny afternoon around the year 1918 it would appear that the Departmental Photographer paid a cordial visit to the office of the Spencer Street Station Master. Carefully waxing his moustache and adjusting his sexy looking uniform cap, heavy with gold trim, the SM then accompanied the photographer in a stroll up to the Carriage Dock located at what is now platform 1, where they introduced themselves to the unsuspecting crew of this Stephenson gear A², possibly being a Stand By engine recently arrived from North Melbourne Loco. Miniature Electric Staffs, with their small size making for easier handling, began to replace large Electric Staff working on the principal main lines from August 1912, beginning with the sections Buangor-Dobie and Dobie-Ararat. There may have been issues with safely exchanging these new fangled things, and at least one signalman was known to have been knocked out cold when a fireman mistook his face for a miniature staff hoop one dark night. Hence the need for a photograph to educate the masses. Our top photo, with its background carefully "white inked" out, duly appeared in the 1919 General Appendix and was reused in the 1928 edition, showing "the method which should be adopted by the employees concerned when exchanging Staffs contained in carriers". Look and learn, people.

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM: This image, which was never published, certainly implies that the crew was taken by surprise. Note the fireman's filthy hands and face, no doubt the result of recently preparing his engine. That would have entailed cleaning the spark arrestor grids and oiling up the inside motion, among his other grubby chores. He was probably looking forward to a wash with a bar of "loco Lux" and bucket of nice hot water sourced from the injector overflow, when the wretched officials rolled up! Notice the poor external state of the A². Her once gleaming Canadian Red livery, set off with white and brown lining, is now covered by a layer of grime, manifesting the shortages of manpower and money back on the home front as the Great War drags on towards its weary, and sadly inconclusive, end.



["A Special Train..." continued]
"Of Course, I'll Pay!"

"Pay! Of course I'll pay!" bellowed the distracted Mr. Potter, flapping his arms aimlessly. "I must be in Adelaide in time to catch my boat! Money is no object! Quick! Where must I go to get things fixed?"

Five minutes later Mr. Potter was telling his story at the Head Office nearby, and within another 10 minutes a schedule for the train had been drafted out, the loco. depot at North Melbourne had secured an engine and crew, the yard a carriage and van, and the S.M. at Spencer-street was feverishly making the necessary local arrangements.

Telegraph and telephone messages were flying in all directions, and in less than half an hour after Mr. Potter's frantic descent on the offices, a light engine, with carriage and van attached, and Mr. Potter contentedly reclining in lonely state in the carriage, was flying after the express, which had been given such a long start.

* * *

This little preamble does not by any means exaggerate the Victorian Railways Department's ability to deal expeditiously with any urgent call for a special train.

Cases, happily rare, have been known where, with a few moments' notice, a special train was required to take a medical man to a patient, or to enable a distracted son to reach his dying parent's bedside.

The complicated nature of the arrangements necessary to allow such a special to reach its destination with the least possible delay will probably be apparent to a person with the most casual and limited knowledge of railway operation.

There may be several trains—goods and passenger—operating on the line which the special train must traverse, and not the least difficult task confronting the time-table framer is the question of which of these trains can most easily be side-tracked or held up to let the special through.

Judgment, skill and practical experience are all needed to solve this knotty problem, and it is here that the elaborate graph system in use in the office of the Chief Timetables Officer, which indicates just when and where each train is located, as well as its relative importance, proves its worth.

Meanwhile, the Loco. Depot has been scraping together an engine and train crew, which occasionally have to be recruited from shunting and other operations.

It must not be thought that the depot maintains a huge staff of first-class drivers and firemen, who sit about and spin yarns until someone comes along and asks for a special train.

Running staff at North Melbourne is kept down to a bare minimum, and at a pinch it is no easy matter to locate any spare men.

The necessary carriage and van for the special are supplied by the yard, and the only guard available may be a porter boasting possession of a guard's certificate.

Stations Must be Notified

Then there are all the different stations and officials along the line, who must be advised of the running of the special. All available telephonic communication is pressed into the service, the telegraphic wires buzz with messages, gatekeepers are warned, the station masters concerned make whatever arrangements are necessary to detain, hurriedly despatch or side-track ordinary trains, and train

running officers ponder over ways and means by which the enforced detention of goods trains may be turned to advantage.

We now come to the catch in the whole scheme—what is the charge for setting all this smooth-working machinery in motion?

A standing scale of charges has been computed, and the cost of all special trains, regardless of varying circumstances or conditions, is determined on a common basis—9s. 5d. per train mile, with a minimum of £5 18s. In addition, 4s. 9d. per train mile is charged if a return journey is commenced within 12 hours, while any light running costs are charged at 4s. 9d. per line mile; 17s. 8d. per hour detention fee is exacted if the return journey is not commenced within 12 hours.

The absence of an elastic charge, which would vary according to the length of time other trains were delayed by the special, means that the Department may often be out-of-pocket after providing a special train. The fixed rate, however, is held to be most equitable from the public's viewpoint, and so anyone can work out the cost of a special train for himself before he applies for it.

These conditions apply, of course, to private specials required at a moment's notice in a case of emergency.

When specials are desired for picnics, country race meetings, and similar events, due notice (say, a week to a fortnight) is necessary, and in these cases the promoters of the special pay a guarantee, determined by the distance the special travels, which is refunded if the special pays its way.

A rebate of 10 per cent. is also allowed in most cases, but if the special is run at a loss the Department retains the guarantee, which merely recoups it for out-of-pocket expenses, and pays the guarantors the amount the special earned.

Train Made a Record Run

Special trains have often had exciting races with death. Only recently a special train was chartered by a man in Adelaide, who wished to reach Melbourne, where his father lay dying.

The train made a record run between the two capitals, the inter-State express was detained to let it pass, but the father died just two hours before the son's arrival.

There was a happier ending to another case, which occurred some years ago. A woman, away up in the Wimmera, had to be rushed to the city for an immediate operation.

Application was made for a special, and although the day was a Sunday, and the station a remote one on the Warracknabeal line, a special left with the patient just two hours after the application was received.

At several level crossings the special had to be pulled up while the train crew sprang down, opened the gates, ran the special across, stopped, went back, closed the gates, and started off again on their life and death race to the city.

The journey was completed safely in record time, and the operation was successful.

Next time, therefore, that the short announcement—"a special train left Spencer-street"—meets your eye in the paper, don't turn the leaf with an uninterested expression.

To enable that special to be arranged, the services and close co-operation of hundreds of employees in all branches of the service had to be secured, and a huge system of transport set in motion.

Railroading isn't the dry, red-taped business some people would have you think it is.

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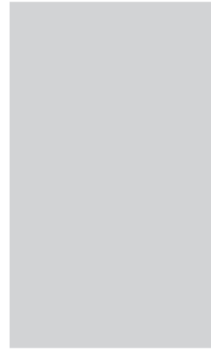
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the little guys. Our thanks
to everyone involved.”**

Maurice Blackburn client



MARC MAROTTA
Secretary
Rail Tram and Bus Union
Locomotive Division

Maurice Blackburn lawyers will go the extra mile to get you the compensation you deserve.

If you are injured at work or have suffered loss, I recommend Maurice Blackburn Lawyers. They are the experts in personal injury law and will get you the best possible outcome.

Maurice Blackburn champions the same values and causes as the RTBU – Locomotive Division. Their lawyers have successfully fought to improve workers’ rights and to achieve fairness in the workplace.

Maurice Blackburn is the preferred legal advisor for our Division. While the firm has a strong reputation in work and road injury compensation, they can also help you with a range of other services including financial advice or will disputes, medical negligence, asbestos related diseases and superannuation and insurance matters.

As a union member you can benefit from a range of free legal services, including a free initial consultation and a standard will.

The RTBU – Locomotive Division is proud to stand alongside Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, who has successfully represented thousands of our members.

If you need legal advice or assistance, please contact the RTBU – Locomotive Division on **1800 134 095**, or contact Maurice Blackburn directly.

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union members since 1919.
We are proud of our history
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look forward to meeting you
to see how we can help you,
your family or workmates.”**

Liberty Sanger
Work Injuries Principal

“The difference at Maurice Blackburn is our belief in what we do. Our lawyers are driven to get the best results for our clients and settle for nothing less.”

Steve Walsh
Chairman of Maurice Blackburn

About us

From the time we were founded by trade unionist and lawyer Maurice Blackburn in 1919, we have had a strong commitment to workers' rights and social justice. We have delivered thousands of compensation settlements for Australians who have suffered workplace accidents, or been victims of negligence and unfair practices.

Why choose Maurice Blackburn?

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We believe the law should serve everyone, not just those that can afford it. We provide flexible fee structures, and in most cases act on a no win, no fee* basis.

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We are not afraid to take on cases against powerful corporations, insurance companies and institutions. For example, over the past 25 years, we have won more than \$1 billion in total and permanent disability claims for our clients from superannuation insurance.

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With more than 1000 staff throughout Australia, we employ some of the country's best and most respected legal professionals. We have specialist lawyers in different practice areas prepared to fight on your behalf.

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With 29 permanent offices and another 28 visiting offices, we are members of your local community and are backed by the resources of our national legal network.

We are on your side

We will get you the outcome you deserve and our experts ensure you get the maximum compensation possible for your claim.

“In two recent workers' compensation cases, we secured more than seven times the initial settlement offers for our clients.”

John Salanitri
Workers Injuries Principal

Benefits for RTBU – Locomotive Division members

Free standard Will

We offer a free standard will to all RTBU – Locomotive Division members and their partners, as well as retired RTBU – Locomotive Division lifetime union members. Find out more from our Wills Department at **1800 371 871**.

Free telephone advice

We provide a free 30-minute phone consultation to answer any legal questions from RTBU – Locomotive Division members, including retired members and their families. If we are unable to assist, we'll make sure you are referred to someone who can. Contact us at **1800 810 812**.

Free first consultation

RTBU – Locomotive Division members get their first consultation free*. We'll explain all your legal options and any potential fees. Most of our practice areas are managed on a no win, no fee basis. Which means that wherever possible you only pay if you win the case.

*Conditions apply



“Our lawyer explained the legal largon to us, provided unprompted updates and broke down language in simple terms we could understand.”

Maurice Blackburn client



Injured at work? You may be entitled to compensation

If you were injured at work or have an illness that was caused or worsened by your work, you will most likely be entitled to compensation. The level and nature of benefits will depend on the date of your injury and your capacity to work.

Lump sum payments for permanent injury

If you have a permanent physical or psychological injury you may be entitled to a lump sum compensation on top of any weekly payments and medical expenses.

You may be able to sue for negligence

If your injuries are the fault of your employer or any other person and you are left with a serious injury, you could be entitled to lodge a common law claim for a further lump sum to cover your pain and suffering and income loss.

Time limits apply so it is important to act quickly. Contact us to arrange a free first consultation to ensure you are informed about your rights.

IMPORTANT TIPS IF YOU ARE INJURED AT WORK

- Report the injury immediately to the RTBU
- Report the injury to your employer in writing within 30 days of the injury
- Visit your doctor for treatment and tell them how you were injured
- Send a copy of the completed work injury claim form to WorkSafe. You can get a copy of these forms from your employer, the RTBU, your local post office, your doctor or WorkSafe
- Do not provide a statement to a WorkSafe investigator without seeking legal advice
- Challenge negative decisions by WorkSafe or its authorised insurer. Make sure you speak to the RTBU
- Seek legal advice if you have a permanent injury. It could be a cumulative injury, such as hearing loss, that gradually developed over your career and that you may not immediately associate with work. Remember you may be entitled to a lump sum in addition to weekly payments and medical expenses
- Seek legal advice if you think you have a claim and might be made redundant or are considering resigning.

Injured on the road? You may be entitled to injury benefits or compensation

If you have been injured in a road accident, you will most likely be entitled to compensation. We manage road accident situations including car, motorcycle, bus, truck, tram, cycling, pedestrian and public transport injuries. We can help you get the most out of your road accident claim and entitlements.

Lump sum payments for permanent injury

If you have been left with a permanent psychological or physical injury, you are entitled to lump sum compensation, no matter who caused the accident. This includes compensation for disfigurement, such as scarring. This is on top of any weekly payments and medical expenses claim.

You may be able to sue for negligence

If your injury is a result of another person's negligence, you can lodge a common law claim for a further lump sum. This is a claim for any pain, suffering and income loss.

To be eligible for a common law claim you must have suffered a serious injury and have lodged a claim within six years of the accident.

Are you unable to work due to sickness or injury?

For most people, superannuation is only used for retirement. But if you have been forced to stop work for medical reasons, you may be able to access disability insurance entitlements from your superannuation.

Draw on superannuation disability insurance

Superannuation insurance is there to protect you if you can't work regardless of how your injury or illness happened. Injuries and illnesses can range from heart attack to mental illness. Any injury suffered at home, on the road or outside work can be used for your disability claim.

You may be able to claim from more than one super fund

If you have changed jobs and are a member of more than one superannuation fund, you could have more than one claim.

"We will check you are receiving the maximum compensation. In one recent case we found the insurance fund assessor made key errors in the benefit calculation and we were able to secure a further \$300,000 for our client."

Kim Shaw Superannuation Principal

It doesn't matter if you are retired and have already withdrawn your superannuation account balance. If you had insurance cover at the time you stopped work, then you can make a claim. We can help you find out whether you are eligible for compensation from more than one superannuation fund.

We specialise in superannuation insurance claims and can check your insurance claim free of charge. We can also check salary continuance and income protection insurance if it is part of your Employee Bargaining Agreement (EBA).

IMPORTANT TIPS IF YOU ARE INJURED ON THE ROAD

- Report your accident to the police immediately or as soon as possible
- Lodge a claim with the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) at 1800 352 556
- Make sure you list all of your injuries, no matter how small, on your claim form
- Seek medical advice and tell your doctor of all injuries and how the incident occurred
- Take photographs of the vehicle or at the scene where possible
- Seek legal advice before speaking with a TAC investigator

IMPORTANT TIPS IF YOU CAN'T WORK

- Contact the RTBU - Locomotive Division or Maurice Blackburn directly for a free superannuation insurance check
- Be aware that the sickness or injury does not need to be work-related. We will investigate this for you free of charge and advise if you have a claim
- Seek medical advice. Even if medical evidence says you are fit for alternative work - you may still be able to make a claim because you're not fit for your 'usual' job
- The RTBU - Locomotive Division and Maurice Blackburn can help you with the entire claims process from checking for cover to gathering the necessary evidence to support your claim
- Get legal help with your claim. Making a claim can be complicated, especially if you have complex health problems, a mixed work history or a hostile work place. If you try to run the claim yourself, it could be rejected
- Be aware that if your claim is rejected, you don't have to accept the decision. There are processes in place for you to dispute the outcome.





Have you been exposed to asbestos?

Asbestos is a deadly mineral that was once used in more than 3000 products in Australia. We have the highest rate per capita of asbestos-related illness in the world. People who have been exposed to this dangerous substance may get seriously ill or die from diseases such as asbestosis, mesothelioma or asbestos-related lung cancer.

There is no safe level of exposure to asbestos and diseases can develop slowly over decades. Trade workers and home renovators are especially at risk of being exposed to this material, which was used in building materials in Australia for decades. Even brief exposure to asbestos can result in illness or death.

Our team of asbestos lawyers have the dedication and commitment to win your claim. With years of experience, we understand the circumstances you and your family can find yourself in, and work swiftly to make the process as stress-free as possible. You can make a claim, even if you were a smoker.

Maurice Blackburn's National Asbestos Register

The free National Asbestos Register has been set up for people who have been exposed to asbestos but remain healthy. The information on the register can assist you and others to recall relevant information and provide a starting point for claims if needed.

If you or someone you know has been exposed to asbestos, you can visit the National Asbestos Register at mauriceblackburn.com.au/register.

“Words cannot express my sincere appreciation for the remarkable outcome of my case. This will give me and my family the financial security we need to get on with life. The team’s friendly and professional approach will always be remembered with deep gratitude.”

Maurice Blackburn client

Assisting you with other legal matters

Our lawyers can assist you with a wide range of other legal matters, from contesting a Will to compensation for workplace bullying. Here are some of the things we can assist you to do.

Contest a Will

If you've been left out of a Will, or think that you have been treated unfairly in relation to a Will, you can challenge the Will to receive proper entitlement. Following our first free consultation, we'll assess and advise whether you have a case to pursue.

Claim compensation for medical negligence

You have the right to trust that your healthcare provider will look after you properly. If you believe your healthcare provider has breached its duty of care, you may be able to make a claim for compensation.

We have Australia's leading medical negligence team, dedicated to helping you get your life back on track. If you think you have experienced negligence or malpractice, we can help.

We also represent families at Coronial investigations.

Sue for wrong or misleading financial advice

You expect financial advisers to help you make the right decisions about your money, so you can safeguard your future and the wellbeing of your family. But sometimes, this financial and investment advice can be misleading, negligent or outright wrong. We will help you recover what's rightfully yours and can sue for compensation.

Claim compensation for injury in a public place

You have the right to be safe when you're in a public place. If you have experienced an injury or been involved in an accident that is the result of another person or organisation's negligent behaviour, you may be able to make a claim for compensation.

We have a team of expert public liability lawyers who will help you fight for your legal rights.

Claim compensation for injury by a faulty product

If you have been injured by a defective product, you may be able to claim compensation. Manufacturers have a duty of care to the users of their products and must take reasonable precautions to ensure their products are safe. Our expert product liability lawyers will fight for your legal rights and compensation.

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All RTBU - Locomotive Division members, and their partners, are entitled to a free standard Will through Maurice Blackburn Lawyers. There is no cost to the union or members for this service.

To claim your free Will, please complete the form on the reverse and post to the return address. Or call our Wills Department directly on 1800 371 871.



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Please complete this form and return to Maurice Blackburn if you would like to receive a free will kit.

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Given name(s)

Address

Contact number

Please post to: Wills Department
Maurice Blackburn
Level 10
456 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

V/LINE CAB COMMITTEE REPORT

By Karl Costanzo

V/line Cab Committee

Cab committee have been very busy of late. In addition to delivering new Vlocity trains, V/line are in the early stages of re-branding the classic fleet to match the PTV image. The first changes will be the fourth N car set to join the Standard gauge fleet in the new colours. N457 will be the first painted and will also be transferred to 'the gauge'.

We have been involved with elements of the N class paint design, mainly from a visibility viewpoint and the main issue we have is with the cowcatcher. In the drawing, it is in plain yellow. There are no stripes as is the case with the current livery.

N classes venture further afield than Vlocitys, and over open level crossings. This area is at a motorists level and the standards employed here need to be at the current level of visibility or greater.

At the moment, it can be seen that the cowcatcher area does not get washed, yet the white striping can still clearly be seen.

There are plans to paint the Y class fleet soon and drawings in purple have been prepared.

Standard gauge power van:

Initial efforts in this department have seen unspoken amounts of government dollars sunk into a vehicle not fit for purpose.

The conversion of the NAM car originally sourced, transported and stripped, have come to nothing and an ACZ car already on hand has been found that can be modified as the fourth standard gauge power van.

Sprinters:

Numbers 1 to 10 have been fitted with ICE and AM/FM units.

A hold has been placed on the remaining units whilst Metrol receives their ICE interface to enable them to be used on the Metro Stony Point line.

Comments on the fit out have been favourable.

Full task linking is now being trialled on one Sprinter unit. Each operation of the controller, brake or whistle, resets the cycle. Once the light begins to flash though, it still needs to be reset by pushing the V.C button.

7012 caught fire in Seymour recently and has been set aside awaiting assessment on a rebuild of the electrical cabinet where the fire started. An audit of the fleet has been undertaken.

Discussions have been held to allow drivers access to this cabinet in the event it occurs again.

It was just luck that the train had arrived at the platform and was not during running in the section.

Pirron Yallock accident loco:

N475 is currently at Newport in a stripped down state ready for a complete rebuild of the No 2 end cab, once the main under frame has been tested and given the ok.

The only thing that exists of this cab is the rear cab/toilet wall, a portion of the side walls and air conditioner frame. It will eventually re-emerge in the new livery.

N class locos:

The remaining N Class locos not yet fitted with the new style air ride seats are receiving these in a program to complete the fleet. This was previously done only on major overhauls and was taking too long to finish off.

Data loggers:

The new data loggers are to be installed across the classic fleet as the current ones are obsolete.

I believe new speedo heads will be required as part of this and I have asked to be involved as I think technology advancements in this area, more suited to our driving needs are available.

Knife switch covers:

Covers are to be installed across the fleet of locomotives, with all N class to be completed by the end of April. The

design of which has been tested and approved by both the cab and OH&S committee. This is one outcome of a Worksafe directive.

V/Locity:

We are at V/Locity number 65 in the current build of 16 new trains and we have heard there are plans for 4 more (12 cars). This will take us up to VL79 and it is suggested these will be P class push/ pull replacements. We are not certain of timeframes for this but, would not expect to see them for another two years, give or take.

There will also be seating layout and handrail changes throughout this build to conform with disability access standards.

We are also trialling a mod that will include the 'coupled' indicator light in the test light circuit. We have been requesting this for some years and are finally seeing progress. This will eliminate the coupler light globe from the fault finding of coupling problems, which are rampant at the moment.

We are waiting on implementation of the wiper/washer mod, and mid life upgrades to the early Vlocity fleet, which include cab items, to bring them in line with the latest units.

Thanks to all members of the cab committee for their hard work to make these upgrades and improvements within the fleet a benefit to all drivers and make it safer.

LIVESTOCK TRAFFIC

By Adrian Ponton

Passenger Sub-Division—Southern Cross

It is by pure chance that some detailed information of the Victorian Railways era has survived. Chance was probably given a helping hand by the fact that from the Depression era and right through until the 1970's clerical staff were encouraged to re-use paper.

Quite often, old single sided circulars have survived only because they were used to take notes and ended up attached to correspondence and files.

This week, I have attached two circulars relating to livestock traffic.

Context

The following circulars are from the period when the Victorian Railways treated livestock traffic as a very high priority. The 1936 General Appendix to the Book of Rules and Regulations and to the Working Timetable (GA) had a specific section giving detailed instructions for Livestock Traffic.

Amongst the instructions in bold type **“Mishandling of Livestock interferes seriously with the aim for safe and speedy transport of consignments, causes bruising, overheating, maiming, etc., and generally produces conditions which are a menace to the important Livestock Industry**

The Victorian Railways had a department within the Transportation Branch to specifically manage the livestock traffic and the senior officer of the department was known as the Livestock Agent (at the time of these circulars). In the days before “instant communication” the daily management of the freight business was a complex task of “wires” (telegrams), circulars along with status and update reports from stations and depots through Train Control.

Amongst the information in the 1936 GA is a list of the livestock vehicles. There were 1124 L trucks (fixed wheel), 100 LB (the same as an L but semi-permanently coupled in pairs with the side buffers removed from one end) along with 50 LL (bogie) trucks available primarily for sheep traffic. L's

were also used for pigs and calves. Cattle were accommodated in the 591 M (fixed wheel trucks) and 25 MM (bogie cattle trucks). Even the narrow gauge lines had 15 NM's for cattle and 6 NQ's (fitted specifically for sheep).

As an aside there is even a reference to bees. Bees were considered livestock and trucks required for this traffic must be ordered, supplied, carded and despatched along with listing on SP notices in the same manner as for ordinary livestock.

S 4192/30

S circulars were issued for the running of special trains, and in the 1930's were also issued to cover services changes to the Working Timetable. In later years, amendments to the Working Timetable were usually communicated through a ‘W.T.T.’ Circular. Certainly in the 1960's and 1970's WTT amendments were on pink paper.

The ‘S’ Circular, provides the details of two special trains running between Seymour and Echuca on Monday 1st September 1930 in conjunction with the movement of 47 trucks of sheep from Echuca. Obviously the engine and van (10.00 a.m. from Seymour) was run to balance locomotives, crews and brake vans with the 10.00 a.m. livestock special from Echuca. The two trains were scheduled to cross at Murchison East and this is where the crew (driver, fireman and guard) from Seymour changed over with the crew from Echuca.

There were also other special trains scheduled on the day a 3.00 a.m. Spl. – S 4197/30 and a 08.50am Tocumwal Spl.- S 4200/30.

Taking 5 to 5½ hours to travel 84 miles was probably good progress. The locomotive would have sufficient coal but would no doubt have taken water once or twice along the route. Water could be obtained at Kyabram, Toolamba or Murchison East.

Assuming the load was a ‘D’ class locomotive, 47 trucks of sheep and a Z

guards van would be 728 tons (15 tons per L truck (10½ tons tare and 4½ tons load per vehicle). A through load for a ‘D2’ class locomotive between Echuca and Seymour was 755 tons. At a squeeze a D1 may have been utilised as a through load for a D1 was 720 tons.

There is no indication of what happened to the consignment of sheep on arrival at Seymour. A special train for a consignment of this size would part of a normal day's operation even in the 1970's (the only difference would be the motive power). The sheep could have been destined to for a number of locations.

If we assume they were going to Newmarket Saleyards they could have continued their journey on a regularly scheduled goods train from Seymour to Melbourne and on arrival at Newmarket the train would have stopped clear of the junction and then set back to the stock yards on the Racecourse line. Special location boards were provided between Newmarket and Kensington to advise drivers where to come to a stand relative to train length. There were also special instructions to cater for the situation where a drop on engine would assist the goods train by dropping onto the rear of the Up train and drawing the whole train clear. Once the livestock was placed the train locomotive would proceed to North Melbourne Locomotive Depot for servicing prior to being rostered for its next job.

Equally, similar arrangements could have existed if the sheep were destined to the abattoirs in the Brooklyn – Newport area. In this case, the train would have run from Broadmeadows to Sunshine and then from Sunshine to Brooklyn or Newport via the goods lines.

SP 97/44

SP Circulars were issued by the Livestock Agent in the Transportation Branch to provide an overview of the intended livestock traffic on a particular date. The ‘surviving circular’ applies to livestock traffic for Wednesday 19th January 1944.

The circular is of particular interest as during WWII, there was an ongoing disruption to train services brought about by chronic industrial turmoil on the coal fields. There were extended periods where livestock traffic was cancelled because transit could not be guaranteed.

Another consideration influencing this program would have been the extensive bushfires that swept through Western Victoria on Friday 14th January 1944. Considerable areas of the State, including the townships of Hamilton, Birregurra, Derrinallum, Skipton, and Dunkeld were caught in the fires. Surviving livestock would have been shifted to other parts of the State for agistment, but equally rail infrastructure had been significantly damaged by the fires – creating further service disruptions.

SP Circulars were still being issued by

the Livestock Office on a daily basis until the mid-1980's when by decree Victoria no longer carried livestock by rail. The demise of the livestock traffic actually started with the 1971 Bland Report. The age and ongoing maintenance costs worked against the longevity of the business. There was a reprieve of sorts with the purchase of 50 'cattle crates' – 20' containers.

Now, only a few livestock wagons survive and are located on some of the tourist railways. But it is a long time since they carried livestock.

Postscript

When working in the 'Trucks Office' in the 1970's, the 'Livestock Office' reported the Superintendent Freight Operations but still worked independently of the rest of the Trucks Office and even prepared their own

timetables for livestock trains.

A story that comes to mind from this era was the guard who was fined for not checking the condition of livestock when changing over. As I recall it, the guard had been previously fined for delaying a train while he checked the condition of the livestock at change over. Subsequently he was fined for not having checked the condition of the livestock during a change over. He appealed the decision and had the fines refunded. The person who liked telling the yarn had been a stationmaster and train controller earlier in his career and was redeployed as a clerk following 'health failure.' His moral to the story, as he told it, was in the railways there was a rule or instruction for every situation, and often they were contradictory, so as he put it, when you were right you were wrong and if you were wrong you were wrong to eternity.



Left:
Surviving examples of livestock trucks (vans). An L sheep van on the left and an M cattle truck on the right. Both vehicles are located at Trentham in central Victoria

Below:
Special Train for Livestock and goods.

VICTORIAN RAILWAYS		
General Supt's Office (59), 31/1/44.		
ALTERATIONS FOR WEDNESDAY 19th January 1944.		
S.P. 97/44.	
GIBSONNE	2 L sheep	NEWARK T
CLARKFIELD	3 M cattle	Y'busband
WODONGA	1 L sheep	Ross
BOWSER	3 L sheep	Golds Mort
SHEPPARTON	1 L "	A.M.L.
YEA	7 L "	V.P.C.
LOQUON	1 M cattle	TEAPALGAR
HAMILTON	1 L sheep	NEWARKET
DUNKELD	3 L "	"
WILLAURA	3 L "	"
MARONA	3 L "	"
SKIPTON	9 L "	GLNG. H.T.S.
ROKWOOD	2 M cattl	BALLARAT
DERRINALLUM	1 M cattl	DRYSDALE
WESTMERE	7 L sheep	NEWARKET
MININERA	1 L "	"
PURA PURA	4 L "	"
WINGEEL	1 L "	"
COBDEN	1 M cattle	"
HEYWOOD	6 L sheep	NEWARKET
PENSHURST	1 M cattl	"
ADDITIONAL LIVESTOCK LOADING FOR WEDNESDAY 19th January 1944.		
ELPHINSTONE	4 L sheep	NEWARKET
MALMSBURY	1 L "	"
KYNEDON	1 L "	"
RAVLESFORD	3 L "	"
CLARKFIELD	3 L "	"
SUNBURY	6 L "	"
TALLANGATTA	1 L pigs	PIROSSOR
TONGALA	1 L sheep	NEWARKET
ALEXANDRA	1 L pigs	BROOKLYN
YEA	1 L sheep	NEWARKET
MT GAMBIER	7 L sheep	GALGIBURN V.P.C.
SANDFORD	2 M cattl	STH BROOKLYN
PENSHURST	4 L sheep	Bell
HAMILTON	2 M cattl	ARARAT
"	5 L sheep	NEWARKET
"	1 L lambs	HORSHAM
"	2 M cattl	PORTLAND.F.W.
"	8 L "	NEWARKET
"	1 L sheep	F Fiedler 10/40am spl
"	8 L "	"
"	19 L "	STH BROOKLYN
"	13 L "	NEWARKET
"	12 L "	KORKE
"	4 L sheep	Wilton 11/15am spl
"	4 L sheep	NEWARKET
"	2 L "	Dennys 7/50pm spl
"	15 L "	STH BROOKLYN
"	5 L "	NEWARKET
"	4 L "	"
"	1 L "	"
"	10 L "	"
"	25 L "	"
"	2 M cattl	UNKNOWN
"	1 M horse	BACCHUS MARSH
"	1 M "	HURSTVILLE
"	1 M horses	STH MORANG
"		Hicks
"		W.ROBERT
"		Live Stock Agent.

TALKBACK WITH HINCH

By Michael A Hinch

Passenger Sub-Division—Southern Cross

Greetings Comrades.

Our fun-loving friends at the Metropolitan system have recently issued a new instruction relating to trespassers. One could suggest that this new instruction is a knee jerk reaction to the old – fact of life – problem of suburban traffic slowing down as a result of a report of a trespasser, on or near a track. The policy regarding trespassers has ebbed and flowed in its forcefulness and veracity over the years with the various custodians of the Infrastructure pursuing an ongoing (it would seem) confusingly ambiguous change to the substance of what should and should not be done in such a circumstance.

I cannot speak for our comrades at Metro but as far as Pass personnel are concerned it is clear that all traffic should come to a stand if a trespasser is reported. It is, in that vein that, no source of surprise that the Met have come up with this new instruction. Allow me to convey an anecdote: I was running an up Sprinter from Seymour to Spencer Street recently and when I reached Craigieburn I received a radio message from the signal box. *“Driver we have a report of trespasser in the section ahead, we would like you to proceed cautiously into the section.”* My response... *“Negative Craigieburn, I respectfully decline to do so, you have advised me that there is a potentially unsafe situation ahead so I will not place myself or this train in that situation. I will remain here until I am given the all clear that it is safe to proceed. Out.”* Predictably, I then received a call from the Control Controller asking me what the problem was. I explained the situation and once again explained that I would respectfully decline to enter the section until it was declared safe. Again, predictably I received another call from the Met Controller who also asked me what the problem was. I politely explained that I would not proceed. I further pointed out that he was the custodian of safeworking on this section of track and I would not

proceed until he gave me assurance ‘On Tape’ that it was safe to proceed.

“Driver, we are just asking you to proceed at a reduced cautious speed through the section in case the trespasser is still there.” My response... *“Metrol, the line speed for this vehicle is 130 KPH so can you please define for me just exactly what constitutes a reduced cautious speed? Is it 129 or is it 119 or is it 15...What is it? There is only one reference to a reduced speed under safe working conditions and that is enshrined in Rule 1 Section 3 and I am sorry but there is no defective signal here to invoke that rule.”* There was a brief muffled response and the next thing I noticed, the signals before me reverted to red. I remained there for 15 minutes.

The upshot of this tail is that ultimately, the Control Controller called me back and advised that the Metro Controller had advised him that the section ahead was safe for my train to proceed. I accepted this assurance (on tape) and advised the Controller that I would then proceed at line speed. In my view, this is the only reasonable response to a report of the potential for a tragic accident. Simply choose not to proceed until it is safe. Is someone going to punish us for acting safely? I am not fond of accidents and I am less fond of potentially being blamed for one.

Now let's think about this situation and the possibilities and possible outcomes. There was never any regulation or protocol documented (of which I am aware) that allowed for a train to proceed into a section where there might be the potential for a fatality. This is something which has crept in bit by bit as a means of conning drivers into proceeding into a section and if something went wrong, the driver would be deemed culpable, not the company. That is my major concern.

Metro have acted on this issue with the instruction I mentioned at the beginning. It is stealthily buried within a document

entitled “DEALING WITH AN INCIDENT OR CONDITION AFFECTING THE SAFETY OF THE NETWORK”. Metro have invented a definition for “Extreme Caution.” It is : *“Being able to stop the rail traffic movement within half the distance that can be seen ahead, not exceeding 25 km/h or the posted track speed if that is lesser, and always being prepared to find the section ahead occupied or obstructed, or the track damaged.”* Cut and pasted from Rule 1 Section 3, and one might ask, how the dickens this has strict relevance to a trespasser?

The Purpose: *“To describe the procedure for reporting and responding to unsafe incidents or conditions affecting or that may potentially affect the Melbourne Metro Network.”*

The Scope: *“This procedure will apply to all Metro employees, employees of Accredited Rail Operators and Contractors working on the Melbourne Metro Network.....”*

Oh really? I have not been instructed by the Pass management to comply with this random, ill-considered edict and it would be madness to enforce it if you consider the following content; Trespasser in Imminent Danger – When a driver considers that a trespasser is in imminent danger, the Driver must execute a REC call. Now, I am not sure what a REC call is, but I am pretty confident we don't have them at Pass. Once again, the instruction is ill considered and doesn't take into account the capabilities of all the players it purports to cover.

The instruction then goes on to talk about Digital Train Radio Standard Operating Procedures. Ok, once again, I have no idea as a Pass driver just exactly what one of those are. Hmmm, did I mention the words ‘Ill Considered?’ I think I might have.

Analysis: What qualifies me or any other driver to determine the mindset of a

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trespasser? How am I supposed to work out, at line speed, whether someone is in imminent danger? Do I get a ration of clairvoyance? Am I suddenly bestowed with the ability to psychoanalyse someone? Can we call this out for the Bull***t that it is and uncloak the intent to use a company edict to blame the driver, operator or contractor if someone gets hurt or worse. And we in the greater rail community are supposed to be bound by this nonsense? I think not. But wait, there is more and it doesn't involve a set of six Ginshu stay sharp knives.

Trespasser – NOT in Imminent Danger – When the driver considers that the trespasser is NOT in imminent danger, the driver is to report the event to the train controller. Once again, am I clairvoyant and exactly which train controller are they referring to? It is obviously Metrol because it then makes reference once again to a REC call (again I say), whatever that is. I can't call Metrol unless I go deep into the menu on the ICE radio and hunt around for the number and I am not prepared to do that while I am driving a train, there are enough distractions thank you very much. My only other option is to call Centrol or phone Metrol on my mobile. I have some numbers for Metrol in my phone (not by regulation, not mandatory and only there by my own initiative). It continues - Then the train controller will issue a group call. Once again, we at Pass and others at Freight don't get those. Just as silly is the part of the instruction which goes on to say that "Acknowledgements for the Group Call must be obtained by Drivers of all rail traffic movements approaching or in the Affected Area.... Are they serious?

The instruction then goes on to try and cover some of its deficiencies by stating that rail traffic movements must be given a verbal warning and told to advise the Metrol controller once the movement has left the affected area. Once again, how do I as a Pass driver effectively contact Metrol? I can only reasonably hope that he has continued to monitor his LTR1new radio channel. Something Metrol ONLY DOES when it suits them, and I aint entering the affected area Jack! End of story! Period... That's all she wrote.

Next clause of the instruction – At a minimum, if the first two opposing rail traffic movements passing the Affected Area confirm no Trespassers are observed, then it may be considered that the Trespasser incident no longer exists and warning can cease. What a piece of sheer

genius in policy development and implementation. "So here is the plan boys, we send two trains into the *Affected Area* and if no one gets run over then its business as usual." However, what if someone does get run over? Well clearly the driver will be at fault because he/she failed to stop within half the distance he/she could clearly see. I somewhat doubt that the author of this policy has ever experienced the determination of someone trying to top themselves. So many of us have. The self-preservation circuit breaker in the mind of a suicidal person has well and truly tripped. The person will achieve the outcome no matter what. All this leaves the driver wrapped in the harsh embrace of culpability because the company's policy says so.

Now for the *piece de resistance*. If the Trespasser(s) are still present upon the passage of the second of the two rail traffic movements that have been previously warned, all movements heading towards the area must be warned to proceed at Extreme Caution, until the line has been attended to by Police or the Trespasser(s) has been removed or detained by alternate means. – Apparently, it doesn't really matter if there is the threat of a serious incident just so long as revenue service continues. It doesn't really matter about the stress the company is forcing upon the operators on the track, nothing else matters than the suburban operating statistics and service delivery targets. We as drivers and other operators are expendable, just so long as a company is not found to be at fault. Once again ad nauseam, I invoke one of my favourite expressions as it relates to the rail industry, the Accreditation system and the mad vagaries of privatization. "As water falls to the lowest point, thus are the politics of blame..."

When the ICE is not nice.

At the Pass, it is an accepted ideal that we treat each other with respect and recognise the virtues of showing courtesy between the various grades. When it comes to professionalism, drivers correctly guard the realms and provinces of Safe Working Regulations, Operating procedures, Brake book of Instructions and Traction Operations as our own and not to be interfered with by other grades that do not hold the related qualifications. With this in mind, it is with some alarm that I note the interference with certain safe working equipment by those who are not qualified. The ICE radio is a very recent addition to the equipment on all modes of traction in

the V/Line fleet. This device is (for all its failings) a sophisticated device and the depths of its use and operation, goes to the heart of critical safety on each vehicle.

Some of our colleagues in the conductors grade have adopted a habit of turning the ICE radio on (anecdotally and presumably for their own amusement) because the screen now displays the speed of the vehicle. Apparently, a manager in Geelong (without any consultation) issued an instruction to conductors to turn the ICE radio on so that delays could be minimised when a driver changes ends on a V/locite. LET'S GET SOMETHING STRAIGHT! If you operate this machine, you need to be qualified in the safe working regulations in the area you are in. Conductors are not. I **do not** want a second safety critical ICE being active on my train if there is a safe working emergency as there are too many unexplained interference issues that have occurred with these machines. Only ONE should be active. When they are active, so are all of the features they were bestowed with to supersede the previous radio system. Amongst these are Off Train Comms – Emergency Transmission function – Active transmission at the touch of the transmit button – The ability for an unqualified person to communicate with geographic rail points all over Australia and therefore the potential to interfere with safe working ANYWHERE. **None of this would pass a risk assessment.**

Unqualified persons should not be touching anything on the driver's desk of any vehicle, let alone the ICE radio. In the Sprinters, we now have an fm radio function. Anecdotally, some unqualified persons have been entering the drivers cab and playing around with the am fm device. If any such person has entered this cab and touched anything, then a driver may be negligent if he/she did not stop the service and do a full prep on the vehicle because you could not know what other equipment the person has touched. The message here is simple. Conductors and other unqualified persons, do not touch the equipment. Don't turn on any switches, do not go near the controls. You are not authorised to do so, so stop it!

Uncontrolled Controllers

On Sunday 12th of February 2017, I ran the 06.35 8610 up Albury Pass. As I was sitting at the platform awaiting departure, I received a call from Juneec control. The controller said that the signal at the border,

Post # WOD36 Home signal was defective and that I had permission to simply pass it and proceed. Such an instruction is highly illegal and irregular in that it is in contradiction of the rules. The train must be stationary at a signal before a caution order is issued. I was still at the platform some two kilometres away. I simply advised the controller that I understood and committed no further. When the time came, I departed the train on time and proceeded to post #WOD36 which was indeed at the stop position and called the controller back. I asked him if this signal was indeed defective and he replied that it was and then gave an explanation that I had never heard before. Something along the lines that the signal was defective because of another train movement was at a certain point somewhere for some reason, that was why the defect had occurred. This explanation gave rise to suspicion. Something wasn't kosher. I eventually prompted the controller to repeat four times (on tape) that the signal was defective and subsequently accepted the verbal caution order. I then proceeded to Wodonga and after departing that location proceeded out onto the main East Track. At that point I observed a freight train sitting on the West line. My suspicion then was that the Junee controller only gave me a caution order to get me off the single line so as to expedite the more efficient passage of the freight train.

I conveyed my suspicions and observations to V/Line management and requested an investigation. The answer that came back from the question to ARTC was that I was just spreading rumours and unsubstantiated innuendo. Ok ARTC, here is my public challenge. **Pull the voice tapes and make them public.** Let us see if the actions of your train controllers stack

up to scrutiny. I dares ya, I double dares ya!!! In the meantime, stop your operators issuing airy fairy caution orders when a train has not even presented to the signal that they want me to pass. This unsafe crap would not fly in Victoria.

If you build it, they will come.

We all know the trials that V/Line are suffering with the North East standard gauge track. As drivers, we share the pain of the organization. This track is a nightmare. It is so riddled with speed restrictions that it is impossible to get a train in on time. This publication has relayed the reports of the damage that has been done to the rolling stock by the rough conditions. The Pass are trying to get a fourth set of cars available for the Albury service without a lot of luck. Reportedly, they recently purchased a redundant Southern Aurora Sleeper Car from a company in Goulburn. As I understand the situation, it was trucked to Newport and gutted in readiness to be fitted out with motors and alternator sets to transform it into a PCJ class power van. Unfortunately, it was discovered that the structure of the vehicle was not sufficiently robust to hold the motor sets. Hey, full points for having a go but it didn't work out.

In recent history, a little freight company known as Freight Australia realised that they needed more motive power and decided to build their own locomotives. The cost of buying new locos off the shelf was decidedly prohibitive so they simply... built their own new ones. They called them the XR class and bloody good locomotives they were/are. They built them for a fraction of the price of buying one off the main manufacturers. They built them in the workshops at South Dynon Loco

Depot. Like any good cake baked in an oven, they simply took a few good ingredients, good technical minds, good basic materials, some off the shelf technology and they simply...built them. Now I ask the question, why can't we simply build a power van? We have a facility, the expertise is out there in the rail community, the materials are available. It's not rocket science.

Radio Shunt Committee.

Yes punters, this poor beleaguered group of individuals (me amongst them) on this committee continue to doggedly return to the occasional meetings for this project and the progress keeps "a gittin slower the faster it be a gittin." Problems with the progress on this project are unfortunately bogged down in the ongoing problem with the deficiencies with the ICE radio and its sporadic, unpredictable faults. If the project proceeds any further, then the next phase will be to finally undertake radio integrity testing in the Spencer Street precinct. This step seems a long way off because the latest risk assessment left the project in complete limbo. One issue arising from the discussions that has become a regular source of complaints by the stake holders is the particularly annoying habit that drivers have of incorrect use of a radio. When using a radio microphone, you are supposed to pick it up and speak across it. Many drivers have a rather basic habit of simply reaching over and touching the transmit button and speaking. If you do that, your mouth is up to 400 millimetres away from the microphone. Guess what, you can't be heard or properly understood by the person/s you are trying to talk to. Comrades, could you all just stop being so lazy and simply PICK THE BLOODY THING UP! No one can hear you.



SIGNAL SIGHTING REPORT—V/LINE

By Colin Holly
Signal Sighting Committee

Metro Overhead replacement.

A lot of the Metro overheads are close to life expired and the proposed high-capacity trains the State intend on purchasing as part of the Melbourne Metro tunnel will draw more power than can be delivered by the current overhead arrangement. Additional catenary wire will be installed resulting in stronger overhead structures being required.

The old lattice structures are installed at 2.1m (7foot) from track centre and the new overhead at 3m. This provides improved sighting for signals as the closest part of the signal can be erected at 2.4m from track centre.

The down side appears to be more structures are required to be erected and the size of the structure greater. As the new overhead structures are to be solid, signal sighting on curves will be more difficult.

We have had the opportunity to review the overhead arrangements from drawings supplied and make recommendations on the placement of new overheads. At locations where the sight lines cannot be readily assessed from drawings, infield inspections are carried out.

The project has altered some of the overheads to assist signal sighting, in particular the up auto approaching Hallam. The overhead structure was intended to be installed 7m prior to the signal at minimum clearance from track centre; visual cluttering meant part of the signal would be obscured. The project is now erecting the base of the overhead structure at 4m from track centre, ensuring sight lines to the signal will not be compromised. As part of the high-capacity trains the Pakenham corridor will be re-signalled, with new overheads providing better sighting lines the new signals will improve viewing.

Barnawartha Logistics centre.

ARTC are well advance in the Barnawartha Logistics centre siding, with the mainline points and signalling for access of the west track commissioned. The second stage is a mainline turnout for access to the east track on the Melbourne side just near the old Barnawartha station. ARTC has been given the Victorian track asset

on a 99 year lease. With a change to a national regulator ARTC intend on reducing safety on this infrastructure.

ARTC understanding and non-acceptance of train to train collision controls are of great concern. Victorian three position signalling affords line speed overlaps for SPAD mitigation. That is, should a train overrun a signal at stop, the line beyond will be clear for the train to stop in.

Vline, Metro and ARTC have applied this principal on all signalling projects to date and they now believe it is operationally inconvenient to provide this accepted safety measure.

They consider trains SPADing an operator issue although as track access providers they don't run trains so they don't have SPADs. History has shown us the consequences of relying on humans to provide 100% infallibility is naïve.

Every rule and safety feature, be it a train stop or TPWS is applied because people make mistakes. Sometimes the smallest indiscretion can have the greatest impact. Whilst every person strives for total compliance, a laps in concentration should not end in a workplace death when a known engineering control can be applied.

In recent times on the North East Standard Gauge drivers failed to react to the warning aspect and approached the controlled signal showing a restricted aspect and only then reacted. Benalla loop was a classic example, the train took the turnout at close to line speed and derailed locos and wagons destroying the VRI institute building and narrowly missed an ARTC track worker. At Wallan loop a Vline train did exactly the same thing, luckily the turnout and carriage set had just been overhauled and managed to stay on the rails.

ARTC have a duty of care to the works and public accessing the network, they should not be allowed to ignore known engineering controls and place the total responsibility on train crews. Whilst we all think it's never going to happen, there is always someone else coming the other way.



NELSON'S COLUMN.

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

Metro Cries Bully To The Union.

It would appear that the December 2015 LocoLines article that caused so much offence to Metro by yours truly was actually a meme of a corpulent Asian kid on the phone enquiring to the Victorian Government as to the whereabouts of his money for running Metro.



For your information Metro, this is called satire and is fair use when citing public entities for their actions.

While we're on the subject of bullying, why doesn't Metro release the full report it commissioned on bullying in the workplace? I think we all know why of course, there are some people in relatively high places who may wish they never commissioned it in the first place. The same people who spoon fed snippets to the press that attacked the blue collar workforce, some of which were pretty outrageous untruths especially the one about stopping short on platform 2 at Flinders Street to watch young ladies ascending the escalators; to do that would leave part of a car hanging off the other end of the platform.

Release the report in its entirety, prove your case to justify your relentless attacks on your staff.

Extract From Metro's ad for Train Drivers.

Not how I remember it.

Attention all Qualified Train Drivers: your next stop could be Melbourne!

Are you interested in joining Melbourne's Suburban Passenger Railway Operator and be involved in positively changing the life and welfare every day? What about bringing your skills and experience to help keeping Melbourne as the most liveable city in the world?

If the answer is "Yes", keep reading!

Metro's culture: ?????

Metro is a multi-award winning organisation and we pride ourselves on our team of honest, high performing professionals who are talented, inclusive and safety

*focused and who are at the core of our success. You will be joining an organisation that is known as a global leader in its field but also prides itself on being dynamic, progressive and **providing real work/life balance to their employees.** Our aim is to ensure that all our people feel comfortable to bring their best to work, and to truly be focused on a common goal which is to provide a world class railway service.*

Metro being a Registered Training Organisation you will have access to hundreds of trainings and will be supported and encouraged to develop the skills and capabilities you need to succeed and will be given opportunities to explore other career paths within the business.



Sounds like a great place to work must have changed a lot from mid 2011, to my recollection there was a toxic culture of micro managing and bullying from the top down. Think I'll stay at Pass.

Metro tender.

The *Metro* franchise is up for tender at the moment and I think it works thus, it is broken into 3 parts

1. First seven year term as system operator.
2. Middle one year non-competitive retendering.
3. Second seven year term as system operator if tender is successful.

At the moment *MTR* is acting as caretaker until the State Government announces if *MTR* get to reap Billions of Taxpayer dollars for no return to the state. Time will tell.

Relieving And Temporary Transfers.

Well Day Relief is back on again after our most recent Enterprise Agreement at *V/Line*, and while I am not opposed to the whole thing it does leave a few unanswered questions for me especially on liability after accidents, for instance for me to go to Traralgon I have to drive between Lang Lang and Drouin which is a bit of a Kangaroo Alley at night, this raises to me the question of insurance cover both property and personal.

1. After contacting several Automotive Insurers, it became obvious that some would say that because you are being paid to drive a private motor car to work, this would

Don't get sluggish at tax time....
AVOID THE MEDICARE LEVY SURCHARGE

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

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

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make it commercial use and not covered by private motor insurance and to others it made no difference. Check with your insurer and make sure you have cover.

2. Normally if you are injured in a car accident, (or worse), the Transport Accident Commission would cover you as part of no fault Compulsory Third Party insurance, however the fun starts because you are being paid by V/Line and your duty of disclosure to tell Insurers something they may not be aware of in the ordinary course of their undertaking anything they may not know, this could place you in limbo while TAC and WorkCare slug it out as to who pays, in the meantime your bills do not stop.
3. I am merely putting this out there as I would like to see V/Line clarify this for my own peace of mind before I agree to day relief.

On the matter of Temporary Transfer the company painted themselves into a corner on that one making life harder for Manpower to cover Country Depots for reasons that are hard to comprehend, my understanding is that expenses are paid under an industrial instrument which is the current Enterprise Agreement, and are clearly dealt with by the ATO through annual Taxation Determinations on the reasonable travel and incidental expenses for any given tax year, further to this TaxPack says that expenses that are paid and not counter claimed in the deductions section of your tax return will be reverted to income and liable for tax, wonder if this was investigated by senior management.

This is my understanding and is of a general nature and is not intended as taxation or financial advice.

WOLOs.

Why are we still wasting time with WOLO when it gets hot, and there seems to be two schools of thought on their application.

Metro hardly ever seem to use them and V/Line slap 'em on with abandon once the temperature hits 36°C why when you go from Dandenong on 2nd class tracks you can do

115km/h once you go onto 1st class tracks at Pakenham with a speed of 160km/h you reduced to 90km/h and become hopelessly late and all the passengers become extremely disenchanted with service to put it mildly.

Some time back there was a risk assessment conducted jointly by Freight Australia, M>Train, Connex and V/Line, with a view to relaxing the frequency of WOLOs. It was agreed that the network would be monitored during a heatwave and WOLO introduced only if the network was showing stress due to heat. The only requirement was that someone would be required to authorise this course of action.

At that point management became very uncomfortable and said they would get back to us. This was 17 years ago and we're still waiting for their response, unfortunately some are retired and some passed on; guess I'll keep waiting.

Platform Speeds.



South Yarra 1874

Why is it at Pass if you are going to stop at a platform you can only do 25km/h on entering the platform but if you are an express train you can do up to 160km/h on the way through? Just asking.

That's it from me write in everyone it's your magazine as well.

“Australia’s Forgotten Volunteers”

with Rod Giri

(Passenger Sub-division, Spencer Street)



BACK in 1985 while working in Bendigo as a fireman on the “big wheel” passenger roster with driver Colin Holl, he talked about receiving a medal for going to the Northern Territory and working on the Commonwealth Railways 3 ft 6 in. North Australia Railway (Darwin-Birdum) up there during World War II*.

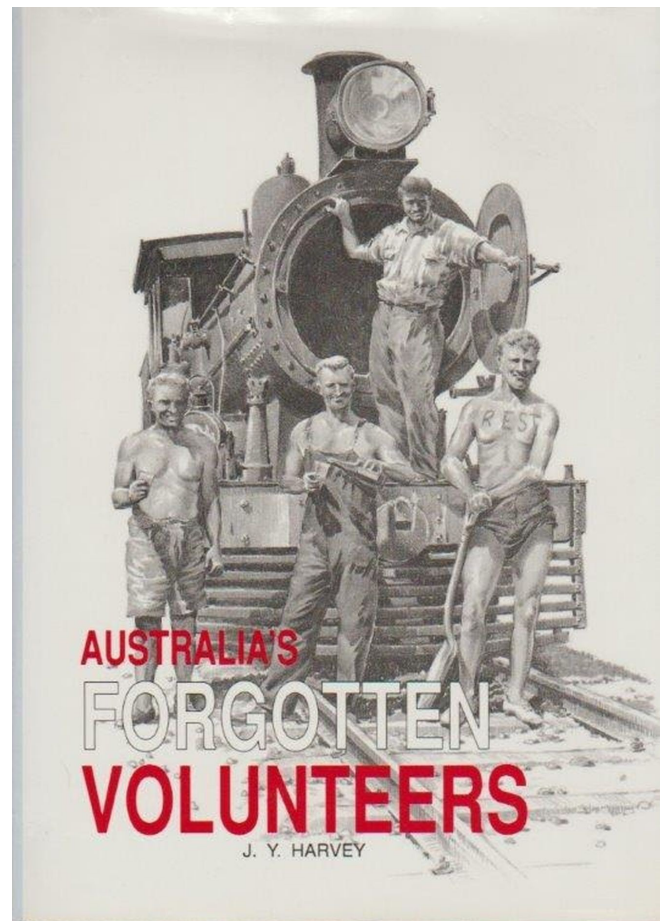
The government had put out a call for railwaymen from the states to volunteer for service as the railways had to be built up, due to the war against Imperial Japan. But after the war they were sent home without any recognition of their involvement. That led to them being known as “the forgotten volunteers” until around 1985 when it was decided to grant them a medal. They had to wait 40 years for this to happen – it didn’t just occur overnight. There was constant lobbying to the federal government.

While in Darwin they were being frequently bombed. Jim Harvey, a railway historian, was in the army also in Darwin during the war. He wrote a book on those railwaymen. It was called *Australia’s Forgotten Volunteers* and it’s a great read with insight into our men who went up there and their stories. Jim Harvey spent many years talking to drivers and firemen all over Australia. I’m pretty sure he played a part in helping these men get their medals.

In 1997 I started working with steam locos. As a fireman I decided to make contact with Colin Holl and my other old drivers from Bendigo to ask them about him working steam locomotives and we became friends again. Visiting him I’d hear all the stories of working at the Top End during the war.

*Victorian railwaymen in WWII also served on the CR’s 3 ft 6 in. Central Australia Railway (Port Augusta-Quorn-Alice Springs) and 4 ft 8½ in. Trans-Australian Railway (Port Pirie-Port Augusta-Kalgoorlie).

The engines were old and antiquated with no air brake or electric lights on them. Those engines were sent from the other states and were the oldest engines that were not in use any more. Firemen had to carry their own Keri Tilly



lamp just to light the cab of a night time to see the water gauge. Then use them in their rest camps. They had to carry their swags in the guard's vans too. Army boots and shorts were usually the uniform and shaving was out due to rashes from the heat. The railwaymen would stand out in the tropical rain together, naked, to try to get rid of the heat rash!

Colin would tell the same stories over. And talk about the crews during a bombing raid, running out of their quarters and across the sharp, slate stone road into the bomb shelter and they would never feel the sharp stones going to the shelter but found it hard to walk back over them after the raids.

Colin had a box camera. He brought it with him and he took many photos working on the trains, some showing the open wagons full of 500 pound bombs. The quarters, which were always pretty primitive. Photos were passed onto me which are to be passed onto a museum. They show part of our railwaymen's heritage. For some it was an adventure.

These men did a great job recording their journey up there during the war and this book tells many of their stories with the army men.

The top end of Australia was closed off and you could only be there on the army's orders. All food and clothes were supplied by the army. It was so hot on the trains they



Colin Holl and W.A. driver Arthur Holm pose in front of a former W.A. G class class locomotive.

Colin Holl

had to pour the melted cheese out of army supplied ration cans onto their bread. Recreation was usually at army cinemas. They got to meet John Wayne in an open stage too!

Anyone wishing a copy of the book *Australia's Forgotten Volunteers* can go online to eBay, Amazon etc. and find it. It has been out of print for some time but it is worth the effort in finding one. The picture **BELOW** is of Colin Holl camera at Alice Springs having a rest with army nurses on their way up north.



RETIREMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS



We say Happy Retirement to the following Drivers who retired from the RTBU Locomotive Division

(in no particular order):

- Ray Stonehouse
- Alf Dowdy
- Alan Bisset
- Russell Bidgood
- Adrian Grossman
- Alan Towart
- Leslie Littlejohn
- Paul Johnston
- Trevor Greensill
- David Cook
- Kevin O'Day



**Applications
Open Nov 2017**

RTBU Locomotive Division SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships are available for children of financial members of the
RTBU Locomotive Division

Applications can only be made online at:

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



Have

your

Say!

No future for PN Casuals

I had a one on one meeting with PN HR in regards to the EA and I asked them questions regarding our future of PN Casuals. It was stated that there is no future for casuals ever becoming drivers or fulltime at PN unless they apply for jobs elsewhere or a position becomes available and we all have to apply through the careers department with the rest of the public.

This was a contradiction because they sent out an email last year for expressions of interest in Engine and Air.

It was also stated that they won't stop PN casuals' career progression if they apply for jobs internally e.g. going over to Intermodal.

PN Manager quote:

"If you change your hair colour from Blue to Blond Metro will take you straight away"

Name withheld

Competency of Railtrain employees

I have worked with a RailTrain casual locomotive driver (apparently) from Geelong depot for the second time today. We are rostered on the 0400 APD pilot currently. This employee demonstrates no locational knowledge, claims to have had APD sidings inspection given by a certain shift manager, consistently asks for on job advice, had not been inducted or oriented at SDL, has no knowledge of the APD-TYD-SDL-NME route and provides a distracting amount of inquiry, to the point where I asked him, *"Who signed your VOC, why are you rostered on these shifts and more importantly why are you accepting the shifts if you know that you are not qualified?"*

I have nothing personal against the employee. I haven't known him long enough to form an opinion. I am extremely concerned at the decided lack of training demonstrated by this and other RailTrain employees.

I have read the email from Gareth Troy regarding the satisfactory perception held over the training scheme by management and the rail regulator toward that which is provided by RailTrain. However, I disagree with this finding.

While our current EA may well state a Level 4 locomotive driver is competent to train and instruct, this is a discretionary capacity. I object to the blatant attempt to have me personally responsible for ensuring incompetent employees are satisfactorily instructed or educated on the job without the necessary tools, recognition and remuneration extended to myself.

I do not have the authority to draft my own personal master plan on a clean sheet of paper. I will not undertake the training and instruction of a new and unfamiliar employee. I expect them to know the basics before starting.

All new employees must be approved for the work at a specific depot, by the Level 5 and 6 route qualified employees, before sending them out to work with Level 4 employees on the roster. How this is seemingly impossible to achieve beggars belief!

Am I understood? Do I need to approach D.Irwin?

Work practices do not become safe because G.Troy says they are safe.

Good day to you.



03 9682 1122

reception@rtbuvicloco.com.au

www.rtbuvicloco.com.au

Level 6, 1 Elizabeth St Melbourne 3000

- RTBU LD Direct Debit
- Victorian Public Holidays

January							February							March						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa	S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa	S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
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2017



RAIL, TRAM & BUS UNION VICTORIA

LOCOMOTIVE DIVISION

Locomotive Division Direct Debit Request Form 2017

ENTERED: / /

Member No.:

Dear RTBU Locomotive Division

I/ We : _____

Address : _____

State: _____ Post Code : _____

*Tick here
if this is also a
change of address
request.*

authorise you, until further notice in writing, to debit the account described below through the Debit System for memberships into the RTBU Locomotive Shared Account, the amount the Rail, Tram and Bus Union- Locomotive Division prescribes.

I/We understand and acknowledge that:

1. The Bank/ Financial institution may in its absolute discretion determine the order of priority of payment by it of any monies pursuant to this Request or any authority or mandate.
2. The Bank/ Financial institution may in its absolute discretion at any time by notice in writing to me/us terminate this Request as to future debits.
3. The prescribed rate may be changed by the Locomotive Division by notice in writing to me/us.

Bank Name: _____

Bank Location: _____

Title of Account (e.g. Mr and Mrs Smith): _____

Bank/State Branch No. (BSB)
or Financial Institution No: _____

Account No.: _____

Direct Debit Frequency: **Fortnightly** Amount if different to prescribed rate: \$

Rates: Please tick ☐ Trainee \$24.20 ☐ Part Time, Casual or Job Share \$33

☐ Trainee 2 \$31.60 ☐ Fulltime Qualified \$49.20

Signature*: _____

*Typing of your name in an electronic format is deemed approval for Direct Debits to be processed

Please Return to RTBU Locomotive Division via fax, email or mail.



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.