



LocoLines

NEWSLETTER FOR LOCOMOTIVE
ENGINEMEN OF THE RTBU VIC

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RTBU
Gender and Diversity Forum
2nd May 2019

**Maurice
Blackburn**
Lawyers
Since 1919

LOCOLINES

EDITION 73 JUNE 2019

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Publisher
Marc Marotta

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SECRETARY'S REPORT

By Marc Marotta
Divisional Secretary

Gender and Diversity Forum

The Locomotive Division together with Maurice Blackburn hosted the Gender and Diversity Forum on 2nd May 2019. We were pleased to receive Metro Trains Melbourne CEO Raymond O'Flaherty, V/Line Corporation CEO James Pinder, and Victorian Trades Hall's Jodie Pesket. The Forum was ably presided over by Maurice Blackburn Senior Associate Jenna Vardi.

Assistant Secretary Jim Chrysostomou recognised the need for an education and awareness program for our members in all the various enterprises in the State, he has been a persuasive advocate for the Division to commence an awareness program for our membership. He also emphasised this awareness program to inform members of the various agencies and assistant programs that are available.

Mr O'Flaherty gave a outline of Metro's efforts and his vision for the future for all employees at Metro Trains; from my perspective it was one of the better things I have heard from Metro for a long time and I believe it was a sincere presentation with a positive outcome in mind.

Mr Pinder's presentation was one of introspective observations and about the evolution of gender equality in the rail industry and his perspective on the future. Clearly V/Lines intention is to accommodate the need within the workplace and it was warmly embraced by the assembly on the day.

Jodie Pesket of Victorian Trades Hall is the Co-Lead for Women and Equality and was a most infectious and enthusiastic speaker about women's rights and the challenges that they confront in a modern workforce. I particularly found her enthusiasm and sincerity refreshing and I came away with an altered view about the interaction in today's workplace.

The audience comprised of members from V/Line and Metro and a number from Freight organisation as well as from the Tram and Bus Division. We also had attendees from outside of our industry.

Jenna Vardi's presentation highlighted the statistics in a number of workplaces regarding Gender Violence and the limited access for women and Gender Diverse employees in the workplace. I wish to thank Jenna for a great presentation and her emceeing the proceedings which were a great success.



*Above from left:
Jenna Vardi- Senior Associate Maurice Blackburn
Jim Chrysostomou-Assistant Secretary RTBU Locomotive Division and
Tarik Koc- Secretary RTBU Tram and Bus Division*





Pacific National Rural and Bulk

Management has made a concerted effort to try and introduce Driver Only Operations (DOO) between Maryborough and Geelong; a number of requirements have yet to be met by the company. PN Bulk has nominated NR Class Locomotives which presents difficulties for the company:

- NR locomotives are over the axle load and can only be compliant if they have 5000lt or less of fuel for the section of track between Maryborough and Ararat, which is impossible to manage.
- Unresolved issues are 75% of the track is inaccessible for road vehicles, so if a driver is incapacitated due to ill health or heart attack there is no means to recover the driver for medical attention.
- Radio communications are unreliable. A formal radio test regime has not been completed
- A holding test for proposed locomotives, should the locomotives brake down and air pressure is lost, is yet to be done.
- Managements attempt to try and extend the strict limitations for DOO shift lengths beyond 8 has been rejected by the Victorian locomotive Division

PN Bulk claims that it is operating DOO in South Australia and Queensland but in Victoria it will not be implemented unless they meet the criteria set out for DOO in Victoria

Chronic issues exist at Bulk in the state of Locomotives not being fully repaired, toilets not working properly and radios not working properly. An ongoing concern is some of our members not being as diligent as they ought to be in ensuring these Loco's don't come into service if not fully repaired.

V/LINE EA

The latest advice given to the Locomotive Division is that V/Line will not be authorised to commence negotiations until the Metro Trains negotiations for a new EA have reached an in-principle agreement position, at this stage that looks highly unlikely.

V/Line won't start negotiations until it has been given consent by Industrial Relations Victoria, a Government department.

METRO EA

Metro has attempted to use the Fair Work Commission to force the RTBU to try and speed up the negotiations for the next Enterprise Agreement. The Locomotive Division will continue to negotiate in good faith and will not agree to any proposals that will be detrimental to our members.

We have provided Metro with clauses that will ensure that only qualified Metro drivers will drive trains in locations like Pakenham East and Calder Park.

Metro needs to understand that the introduction of second tier train operators that drive trains for less pay and no conditions is not a proposal that the Locomotive Division can accept because the long term affect would be to reduce the wages and conditions for existing drivers! The experience in other industries has been that second tier employees are used to do overtime at reduced rates.

The Locomotive Division will continue to negotiate for the best outcome for members.



PRESIDENTIAL REPORT

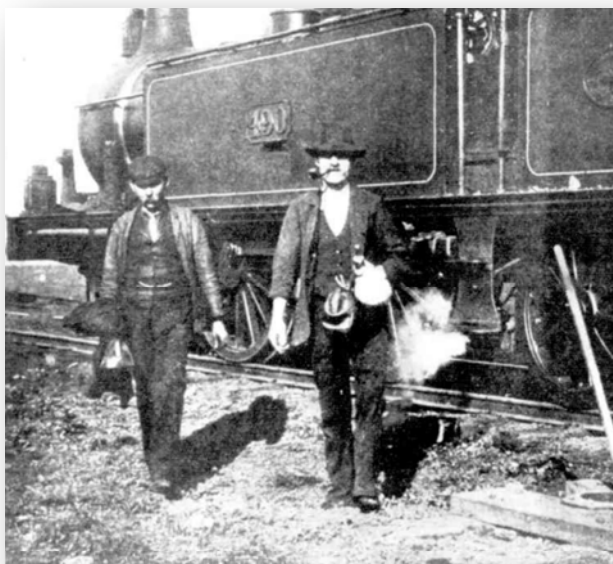
By Wayne Hicks
Divisional President

116 years on—The great railway strike of May 1903 –Melbourne

Unparalleled in Australian Industrial History, the strike of railway locomotive drivers and firemen took place in Melbourne for a week from 9th May of 1903

Railway employees fought against the Governments actions to try and take away employee's pensions, cut wages and remove other privileges including Unionism.

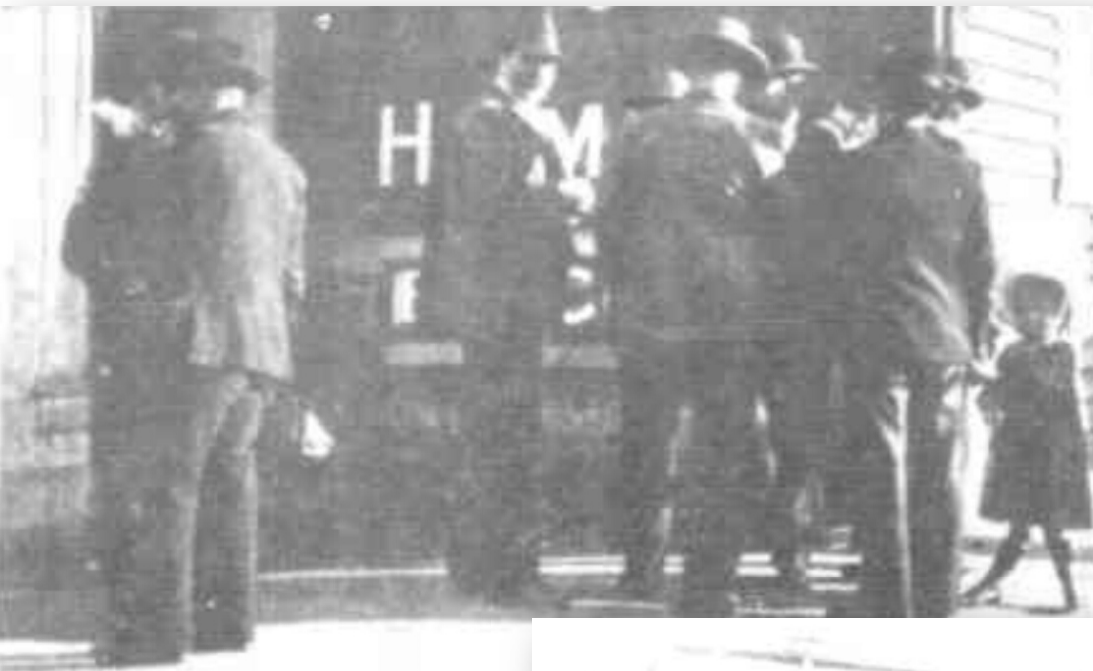
Melbourne City became chaotic and was at a stand still in transport; strikers and their 'sympathisers' were outraged gathering at Flinders St and at Princess Bridge hooting at passing trains and deserting their posts!



Above left: A Driver and fireman walk off their engine to strike.

Above right: A striking driver and firemen

Left: Striking Crowds at flinders street, there was also large crowds at princess bridge.



*Left:
Striking drivers and fire-
men*

*Below middle:
Crowds gather on
cable cars.*

*Below bottom:
Cycling became
extremely popular.
Men, Women and
children travelled along
dusty roads to their
destinations as trains
were abandoned.*

Suspicious accidents occurred and rails were soaped and greased for about a mile, delaying arrival of trains for hours.

The Union at the time had declared that out of the 750 members, only three remained at work.

The strike ended with the threat of a 'Strike Suppression Bill'.



Heritage Certificates



Above: Members holding their Heritage Certificates

From left to right : Mark Seeley, Rob Morgan, Dave Richards, Steve Milne, Jeremy Lavery, Simon Jones, Andrew Johnston, Couper Hind, Craig Haber, Murray George, Steve Cox, Frank Callipari, Chris Barnett, and Mark Banfield.

On the 9th December 2018, a ceremony for the Heritage crew was organised by the late Sean Kelly and certificates were presented by Heritage Pool Crew Co-Ordinator Mick Welch.



Heritage certificates (above) were issued to members at Williamstown museum.

Congratulations to the members, it was a lovely presentation.

To the left the late Sean Kelly speaks to Heritage members Trevor Penn and Dave Richards at the ceremony.

WH.

South Dynon

Pacific National have been scrapping A class (*below left*) and X class locomotives to free up yard space to accommodate V/Locitys. New provisions will be provided to accommodate train crews. Management intend to place a yard foreman and shunters at Sth Dynon to coordinate the movements in and out of the yard. Currently there is no fuelling of V/Locitys or Sprinter Rail cars at Sth Dynon and Management plan to modify the Y class road for V/Locitys for fuelling.

Washing windscreens and windows will be completed in the dual gauge wash road. The Footscray end of the yard does not currently hold a six car V/Locity set and would be required to be extended by 35 metres.

The Footscray end of the maintenance shed will require pathways and lighting to accommodate stabling of V/Locitys.



Above: A Class being chopped up

On the 5th December 2018 while attending South Dynon, I witnessed the old RTI Training Centre building being dismantled (*below*). The entire area was being demolished.



*Above: The former RTI Training Centre getting dismantled South Dynon
Left: The old Union Room at South Dynon being demolished*



While the crane dismantled the training centre the same had happened to the old Union Room (*Left*), which was on the Standard Gauge side.

I attended South Dynon again on the 26th May 2019 and was intrigued to see the Simulators from the old RTI resting under the city link bridge.

Below we see the Comeng and G Class Cab simulators fenced off outside the demolished Training centre.



Suicide Prevention

Suicide prevention is an incredibly complex and sensitive challenge worldwide. Over a 5 year period in Australia, the average number of suicide deaths per year was 2,918 with a further staggering 65,000 suicide attempts.¹

We all go through life's challenges including grief, relationship breakdowns, and tough times at work or home and it is important to reach out to people whom we trust and know will listen. Depression and anxiety are relatively common conditions and there are a number of treatments available and support options. But one needs to seek help, and the earlier you do, the better it will get. The first step is acknowledgment and acceptance.

Railway suicide is a problem rarely discussed in public, but one that has been around since the early days of rail. Suicide has such a devastating impact on family, friends and whole communities so I encourage you to look out for one another and if you feel someone is struggling, offer support and encourage them to seek professional help.

Who does it affect?

Anxiety, depression and those feelings leading to suicidal thoughts can affect anyone. Six in ten men die from suicide each day.² LGBTI people and those that have a chronic medical condition are more likely to develop and experience depression.³

Myths about suicide include thinking a person is just seeking attention, but maybe it's them saying 'I need help!' All forms of self-harm and suicidal expressions should be taken seriously. Talking openly about suicide does not mean encouraging it, rather it can offer options of treatment and support.

If you need to talk to someone, you can contact Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636 or Lifeline 13 11 14 or contact the Suicide Call-back service on 1300 659 467.

Take the test: Anxiety and depression checklist (K10)

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/anxiety-and-depression-checklist-k10>

This online checklist measures if you have been affected by depression and anxiety within the last four weeks. Answers are confidential and you can print and take to your GP for record if you feel the need.

Beyond Now – Your suicide safety planning app

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/beyondnow-suicide-safety-planning>

The online safety plan called Beyond Now, available as an app through the App Store, Google play or Online via Beyond Blue, is a personalised plan to refer to that reminds people of their reasons to live and who they can connect to, offering suggestions and support along side the help of a health professional.

¹ <https://www.lifeinmindaustralia.com.au/about-suicide/suicide-data/suicide-facts-and-stats>

² <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/who-does-it-affect>

³ <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/who-does-it-affect>

V/Line

Management is unwillingness to use a power van, particularly on the Shepparton Service when operating 'H' car sets, continues to be an ongoing problem with no resolution in sight.

Car sidings Southern Cross

The saga of the car sidings is an ongoing issue with the poor condition of the yard and lack of water supply at the east end of the yard. Increasing ad hoc fuels are exacerbating this situation and despite Management's claims for at least the last 10 years that the yard will be upgraded, to date nothing has transpired. Some regional locations such as Bendigo and Ballarat have had major upgrades but the busiest fuel point has been overlooked.

Wyndham Vale Sidings

New sidings are currently being built in Wyndham Vale and will accommodate six V/Locity car sets on a daily basis and will be fuelled by road tanker and dewatered in a 3 hour time frame during off peak. This is occurring in conjunction with the closure of the storage yard in October/November 2019. Eventually the Wyndham Vale sidings will be taken over by Metro and as yet the time frame is unknown.

—Wayne Hicks



ASSISTANT SECRETARY REPORT

By Jim Chrysostomou
Divisional Assistant Secretary

Metro Enterprise Agreement (EA) Bargaining

I recall during the 2019 RTBU elections that the unsuccessful and aspirational candidates for the Locomotive Division offices, formed the view in their limited capacity and knowledge that EA bargaining was simple and all you had to do was compile a list and provide this list to management and then you go from there.

I found the above advice was effective for grocery shopping but lacked significant depth, planning and preparation for bargaining.

In bargaining you can expect that there will be competing objectives with both parties wanting the best possible return for who they represent. Other behaviours that are ordinarily exhibited by Management representatives are dishonesty, misleading conduct and superfluous proceedings initiated in Courts or tribunals in an attempt to circumvent the bargaining process and misrepresent facts to have an agreement forced upon the Membership as opposed to doing the job they [management] have been employed to do and negotiate an outcome.

The current bargaining meetings have seen Metro reinvestigate and blow the dust off the 2015 campaign to remove approximately eighty (80%) percent of Train Drivers terms and conditions which will ultimately lead to no protection.

This "unorthodox" proposal from an employer to request the entire Membership enter into a trust me arrangement with the entire trust investment coming from the workforce and in return Metro promise all involved an abundance of riches and benefits.

"What Is a Ponzi Scheme? A Ponzi scheme is a fraudulent investing scam promising high rates of return with little risk to investors. The Ponzi scheme generates returns for early investors by acquiring new investors. This is similar to a pyramid scheme in that both are based on using new investors' funds to pay the earlier backers. Both Ponzi schemes and pyramid schemes eventually bottom out when the flood of new investors dries up and there isn't enough money to go around. At that point, the schemes unravel".

Some may say that the paranoia increases the longer you are a Union Official but the question remains, what has an upstanding pillar of the corporate community with it's own loyalties to their shareholders have to gain by removing any legal obligations to adhere to a set of rules and conditions that provide structure at work and that enable the Membership to plan their life away from work.

Regular meetings have been scheduled with both the Operations and Locomotive Divisions in addition to meetings to negotiate Divisional specific claims with the respective groups. At this point the majority of claims have been tabled by all parties and negotiations are continuing and the RTBU is committed to negotiating in good faith with a view on reaching an agreement that is in the best interest of the entire Membership.

At the time of writing this article an application for a Protected Action Ballot Order was lodged with the Fair Work Commission, seeking approval from the tribunal to ballot the Membership on approving a right that exist under legislation to take a range of periodic or indefinite bans against Metro during the bargaining process. The return from the Membership in 2015 was a resounding YES vote endorsing all items listed for actions to assist in advancing the claims for a replacement enterprise agreement.

With the Metro proposal seeking to remove your conditions there is only one way to vote!

Metro's proposal!

This Schedule applies to the Driver Grades specified in clause 4.1 of the

1. HomeSafeNight Network

(a) HomeSafeNight Network Rosters

- i. Rosters generated for the purposes of HomeSafe subject to the normal consultation process.
- ii. Start times on Friday afternoon shifts for Flex, C, be altered up to four and a half (4.5) hours from shift start time of the first week day shift.

(b) HomeSafeNight Network Train Provisions

Trains required during the HomeSafeNight Network or continuous service will be exempt from the twenty-four (24) in clause 30 (a) of this Schedule. For the avoidance of doubt, the preparation of the first train for service up to and including the passage of the train on Sunday

2. Support for Government Construction, Renewals, Projects, Grossing Removal Program

During periods of occupational closure (part or full) or social renewals projects including grossing removal work

- (a) Employees may be required to temporarily work on the Metro Driver Training Scheme. Employees not to be included in the shift rostering process. Breaks to be taken during the course of the day and night shift hour from the commencement of the shift. This may entail a shift length of eight (8) hours with travel time calculated over and at the end of the process original core times and off roster pay

- (b) Employees may be required to be isolated to one (1) Metropolitan Rail Network to facilitate post commissioning possible. During this period, the provisions under clause Schedule do not apply, with the exception of the provision off train break after four (4) consecutive shuttles. It is rostered to drive the same train from the ends of the line location through Finders Street to an intermediate location

- (c) These arrangements in combination may be in place to three (3) months unless otherwise agreed between the parties

3. Metro Driver Training Scheme

- (a) Train Drivers will undertake the Metro Driver Training Scheme Qualified Driver
- (b) The Metro Driver Training scheme will consist of both full-time and part-time training for Metro South or Metro North. It will consist of (41) to fifty (50) weeks of training, which will comprise hundred and fifty (150) hours of practical driving with an A training needs analysis (TNA) will be completed for each

Metro propose to

DELETE your conditions!

VOTE ☒ YES for protected action.

V/LINE OH&S REPORT

By Ron Hall and Matt Billman

V/line Southern Cross

Injury Prevention - it's not a joke!

Recently a manager made a statement during a discussion where the OH&S team were trying to resolve a safety issue raised about open access to a high speed rail corridor (RRL). The manager offhandedly asked ***"but is it unsafe?"***

A careless statement to make from the comfort of your office; a simplistic view on safety about the present situation. Unfortunately the manager did not consider what danger could occur or even what has occurred in the past. In other words what we believe we were being asked was *'has an incident occurred or been reported?'*...well no it hadn't. *'Then it must be safe right?'*

This view doesn't take into account the most basic concept of Health & Safety in the workplace: Prevention!

Preventing injury or harm is achieved by:

1. Respecting safety concerns when raised, especially noting the past history of RRL and Rail in general,
2. Adhering to safety standards, safety management systems and compliance with legislation and regulations,
3. Fulfilling your obligations to control risk in the first place (as a Manager or an employee-we all have a role to play),
4. Providing awareness training even competency training,
5. Having an unbiased view and not dismissing safety concerns when raised or closing out those that haven't been fully resolved just to clear the books.

Whilst this manager has now moved (or has been moved on), in a sense the V/one hazard reporting system which our employer strongly urges us to use is of the same mould (living in the present).

By all means we urge everyone to continue to report the hazard/s, but there is still a requirement to do regular workplace inspections and hazard control by those elected HSR's who have been trained and know the history, culture, work environment and respect the various safety standards, in order to prevent those foreseeable hazards from occurring in the first place—Prevention!

Another manager (senior manager this time) suggested that to lower costs on a proposed modification, that the crews doing fuelling duties in the Car sidings fuel point should tie absorbent cloth or paper to their shoes to mop up the residual fuel spillage on the walking surface when the fuel hose is disconnected. No I'm not joking!

This was said in response to a proposal to install non slip composite grids on the walking surface to drain away that residual fuel spill and stop contaminating the walking

surface as an engineering fix and a preventative measure. I believe management are now in dispute as to which department is going to pay for the modification before it can go ahead.

Diesel emission exposure

On another matter regarding safety, V/Line have decided to do their own study on diesel emission exposure in the Southern Cross precinct after years of getting the run-around from other authorities. Once a study has been completed our OH&S team will be looking for our concerns to be addressed and the recognition of the World Health Organisations declaration in 2012 about the health effects of exposure.

Asbestos

We were informed by email that management were reviewing the company's Asbestos Management Guide with their draft review stripped back to the bare basics then adding asbestos dumping on the network and combining Lead management into the guide.

With the assistance of the Ballarat Representatives our OH&S team submitted our version with coverage for the classic fleet and heritage rolling stock manned by our members.

Quite a bit of time and effort was put in by our OH&S team in cross referencing the guide with prior versions and Worksafe's regulations, only to find out later that management had set up their own working party to review, formulate and issue their own version.

By dictating and not consulting or allowing our input, a dispute was looming. Fortunately a more engaging and proactive member of their safety team saw where it was heading and intervened by consulting with us and listening to our concerns. The deadline was extended and another draft version submitted. We are now waiting for their response.

Victorian Rail Industry Operators Group Standards

The Victorian Rail Industry Operators Group Standards (VRIOGS) is under threat of folding due to the rail groups involved wanting to walk away and do their own thing or set their own standards. This is a real concern for us as it has provided consistency and minimum standards across the rail industry in signalling, level crossings, platforms, track infrastructure and rail yards. This is all despite project managers and engineers using these standards as the benchmark with no desire to exceed/improve further once these standards were achieved.

If you have any questions on ANY safety issues or any other safety concerns or queries please come and see us or give us a call.

BULLYING – A WORKPLACE ISSUE

Recent research has found that half of all Australian employees will experience workplace bullying during their careers.¹

What is workplace bullying?

Workplace bullying is repeated and unreasonable behaviour targeting a specific worker or group of workers that causes a risk to health and safety.

Bullying behaviours can include:

1. Abusive, insulting or offensive language or comments
2. Aggressive and intimidating conduct
3. Belittling or humiliating comments
4. Victimisation
5. Unjustified criticism or complaints
6. Deliberately excluding someone from work related activities
7. Setting unreasonable timelines
8. Spreading rumours
9. Changing work arrangement to deliberately inconvenience someone

What are the impacts of workplace bullying?

Workplace bullying has a real impact on the victim as well as their workplace as a whole, in terms of productivity and work culture.

Workplace bullying can lead the victim to experience:

1. Distress, anxiety, panic attacks or sleep disturbance
2. Physical illness
3. Reduced work performance
4. Loss of self esteem
5. Feelings of isolation

What can I do if I see someone else being bullied?

For every one employee who experiences workplace bullying directly, many more may experience trauma as a result of witnessing the bullying behaviour.

It is important to know that witnesses play an important role in identifying and calling out workplace bullying.

Here are some simple steps to follow if you witness bullying in your workplace:

1. If safe to do so, confront and call out the bullying behaviour
2. Write down the details of the conduct soon after you witness it
3. Keep any emails or other documents which include evidence of bullying
4. Speak with the victim directly and offer your support
5. Share what you have seen with the relevant Supervisor

¹ <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-10-09/half-all-australians-experience-workplace-bullying-survey-finds/7916230>

What can I do if I'm being bullied?

If you are experiencing bullying, always contact your Union to get advice and support.

Some important steps that you can take include:

1. Documenting each instance of bullying behaviour
2. Reaching out to your support networks
3. If you feel comfortable, confronting the bully with a trusted support person
4. Filing a complaint with the relevant supervisor or HR officer
5. Raising the issue with the union
6. Making an application to the Fair Work Commission for an order to stop bullying

If you do feel like you need support or counselling, consider reaching out to your relevant Employee Assistance Program or an external mental health support service.

Support Services and Further Information

1. **Australian Human Rights Commission** (<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/>): provides information on workers' rights to a discrimination free workplace.
2. **Beyond Blue** (<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>): provides information and support including a series of videos on how businesses of varying types and sizes have created mentally healthy workplaces.
3. **Black Dog Institute** (<https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/>): provides educational programs and resources for health professionals, community groups, workplaces and schools.
4. **Fair Work Commission** (<https://www.fwc.gov.au/>): provides information on national anti-bullying laws.
5. **Lifeline** (<https://www.lifeline.org.au/>): provides all Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to 24 hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.
6. **SANE Australia** (<https://www.sane.org/>): provides a suite of mental health resources for businesses and organisations.
7. **Suicide call back service** (<https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/>): a nationwide service that provides professional 24/7 telephone and online counselling to people who are affected by suicide.
8. **R U OK?** (<https://www.ruok.org.au/>): provides guidance and resources to help start life-changing conversations and prevent suicide.

**Maurice
Blackburn
Lawyers**
Since 1919

LEGAL REFERRAL PROGRAM

For Industrial, Family or Criminal
matters, contact the RTBU
Locomotive Division for a referral
and receive a free legal
consultation

9682 1122 or reception@rtbuvicloco.com.au

SIGNAL SIGHTING REPORT

By: Colin Holly

Signal Sighting Committee

Swan Hill Upgrades .

The McCallum Street Level Crossing in Swan Hill is to be upgraded, with the signals either side of the crossing and the two up end signals being converted to LED. A new signal panel will also be installed in the station building.

The quadrant lever for the down home semaphore and annett key on the platform will be removed and a new key switch will be installed on the platform controlling the new LED signals.

The wharf siding will be removed and new pushbuttons installed at the plunger points each end of the yard.

This work should be completed in the coming months.

The following dwarf signal has already placed to proceed creating a possible SPAD risk. This is even more so at night when the depth of field of the LED signals makes it hard to judge the distance based on signal brightness.

We have been in discussion with the project and expect to have it removed when the double line is commissioned.

As part of the stage works, the siding at Melton will be removed, with the new up track becoming the temporary siding. During this time the existing siding will be removed and a new one constructed in a similar position.

The solar lighting, pathways and signal will be relocated to a similar positing on the new alignment.

The Ballarat line upgrade.

Signal sighting is just about completed for the corridor, with Millbrook and Bacchus Marsh the final location to be done. Bacchus Marsh has been difficult with the up end points moving further in a down direction towards Fiskens Street, this has resulted in the new down home moving into the tight curve. A co-actor will be provided on the boundary fence, with the previous signal only displaying medium speed warning when the signal is at stop and will provide reasonable viewing.

Most of Bacchus Marsh yard has been removed, with the lead to the coal siding remaining in this interim stage and turntable remaining for the final. This has allowed construction of the new platform face on the yard side, which will have public access by a footbridge.

Maddingley siding down approach was to have the signals clear up for movements into an unoccupied road. The signal arrangements reflected this, somehow the designers ran their own risk workshop and found drivers were unable to control the train at 15k/h on a running low speed. They envisaged short warning on the level crossing. They then applied an approach track of 60m leading to the signal, with a 24sec timer. Drivers are required to stop, the crossing runs and the signal clears.

Pakenham line upgrade.

The Pakenham line signal upgrade to improve capacity has resulted in some very poor out comes. We are no longer invited to review the signal design prior to construction. The engineers desktop the arrangements, determine the locations and direct the contractors to construct. The first time we get to look at the changes is during commissioning, when the signals are erected and lit.

Pakenham is an example where it looks good on paper, but in reality doesn't work. The up signal from platform 1 was previously co-located on the same gantry, as per the standard and good practice. A new gantry was erected closer to the platform separating the signals and taking it out of the driver's direct view. This has made the signal a SPAD risk. As the level crossing at the station may be operating, the driver looks forward and reads through to the next signal, everything appears normal and departs. The new gantry is a cantilever with the mast in the carpark and the landing across two tracks. This takes away the visual cue, where normally if you don't see the signal lights, you still get to see the mast of the signal or the leg of the gantry.

We have recommended to the project to fit a co-actor at cab height on the platform side.

The down mainline signals protecting the entrance to the Pakenham east maintenance facility have been placed on a gantry, in a left hand curve and behind a bridge abutment. The curve speed has been dropped to 90k/h in an attempt to meet the minimum sighting requirement of 10sec at line speed. It fell short and was constructed anyway.

The signals are also approach cleared for movements into the maintenance facility, this has been raised as a SPAD risk and the project are currently investigating installing banner indicators.

Wyndham Vale.

The sidings are well under construction, with completion later in the year. The stabling area has been built on a footprint of six roads to hold 12 cars each. In this first stage of construction, two roads will be left out. This will provide heavy vehicle access between the four tacks for fuelling and de-watering.

The original intention was to provide one boom gate at the entrance to control road traffic. When all the trains had arrived and crews were clear of the yard, the semitrailers would fuel every train. It was found the window between peaks is too tight to complete the refuelling. To save time they now wish to fuel the trains as they arrive.

There has been some discussion around how best to keep road tankers clear of drivers during preps, docks and shunts. Additional boom arms, lockout features, delineation fencing, dedicated walkway and visual warnings, are all being considered.

The new track work on the mainline will permit down trains to arrive into both up and down platforms and terminate. Trains will be able to access the siding from both the up and down platforms. A holding road is being provided to change ends for empty car movements, so the platforms don't have to be used. The set up will be very similar to Wyndham vale south, where a medium speed warning will be signalled off the mainline, with a short overlap at the end of the siding. The new mainline turnouts are all 65k/h with no approach clearing.

Colin holly.

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Where Is It?

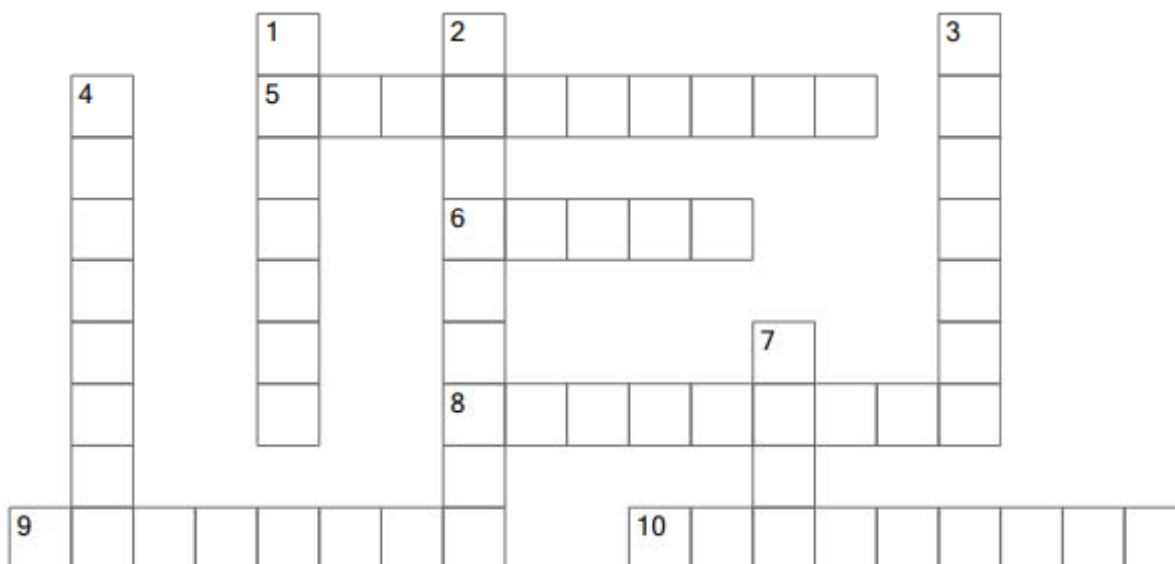
with Trevor Penn and Des Jowett

edited by Warren Banfield

Due to unavailability, Where Is It? has been postponed and will return next edition with the winners of the previous edition announced

Trains Crossword

Complete the activity.



ACROSS

5. A self-propelled vehicle
6. Railroad station
8. A document that has the schedules of all the trains of a line
9. An employee who drives an engine
10. The conductor shouts this when ready to go

DOWN

1. A member of the train crew who provides flag protection
2. The chief of a train crew
3. A staffed car at the rear end of freight trains (no longer required on all freight trains)
4. One who assists the engineer and checks on the operation of the brakes
7. A steel bar used, usually in pairs, as a track for railroad cars

locomotive
all aboard
caboose

engineer
flagman
depot

conductor
brakeman

rail
timetable

V/LINE BENDIGO

By Neville Brown

Bendigo Sub Divisional Secretary



Above: Bendigo footbridge and new overpass construction

Bendigo upgrades and changes:

By the time, this article goes to print, Bendigo station should have a new pedestrian over pass with lifts and ramps added to provide better access between No 1 & 2 platforms, hopefully allowing for trains arriving on either platform as required minimising delays. The existing footbridge will remain due to its heritage listing.

Part time driving positions have been called for in the Bendigo depot; this has come about due to the Australian Fair Work Act where employees can request flexible working hours and rostering conditions due to family or personal requirements. Changes may be granted, as long as no other workers are disadvantaged and the employer can accommodate such requests. Marc Marotta is currently in negotiations to achieve the best outcome for the Bendigo depot. I do believe if this is not controlled properly, it may have a negative flow on to other country depots. Once again, consultation and being told what is going to happen seem to be perceived as one in the same.

Elections and Enterprise Agreement:

The union elections have come and gone and (*just my opinion*) the outcome was pleasing. All of our Locomotive Divisional delegates were returned to office which is of great importance in the upcoming EA negotiations, which will be one of the hardest fights we have seen for a very long time: to keep our work conditions! This EA will

shape the future for our new generation of Drivers.

We have had a good response in Bendigo from our younger members putting their hand up filling all positions of the committee and delegates.

I would also like to thank Neil Sheard for his contribution as Bendigo Sub Divisional Secretary over the past 12 years. We all know how demanding it can be at times.

Representation:

As we all know times are changing and as I have heard one man say, 'you can change with them or you can let them pass you by.' Change is inevitable but must be for the right reasons. If a change is not right we will speak up!

A reminder to all members: if issues arise in your day to day work requirements please come and seek advice from any delegate you feel comfortable talking to. Help and advice is an important part of our roles. BUT, if you don't like what you hear by all means seek an alternative opinion. While I hold this position I will try to assist whenever I am asked.

Oh yes one last thing—I do believe our union has been great for a long time. If you need assistance you must ask for it and we will help!

V/LINE CAB COMMITTEE REPORT

By Karl Costanzo
V/line Cab Committee

V/Locity

VL76-79 have been delivered and stored pending rectification of issues surrounding their weight in relation to braking. It began with weighing of the suspect vehicles and it was found that they were heavier than spec. Their capacity for a greater crush load of passengers was higher than the original spec, yet the braking curve the vehicles need to meet was unchanged. Infrastructure responded, first with a request to reduce their maximum speed by installing cab stickers to warn drivers of the restriction for these four vehicles only. When this was deemed too difficult to manage after input from the Cab committee,

Infrastructure lowered speeds on certain lines. At the same time, a revised weight was published in the network service plan, denoting the 3 car vehicles weight up by 10 tonnes.

After a meeting with the Locomotive Division, it was decided necessary to test the vehicles in maximum crush load conditions. This is known as AW3, and equals the weight of 6 people per square meter, at roughly 72kgs each. Original VL crush load testing catered for only four people per sq/M.

VL79 has been on multiple crush load braking tests and the results from the perspective of the cab



ABOVE : VL80, minus nose and absorbing rams. The crumple zone is from the coupler to the flat steel collision plate below the wide vision windscreen. Photo: K Costanzo.

committee are varied, with many failed passes, and some that fell within the 10% allowance.

A decision on a release for traffic is yet to occur, with very minimal communication on the situation from those above.

Also, of note is these vehicles have a number of mods and changes that affect drivers, conductors and public. The changes for drivers are yet to be published so that correct preparation of these vehicles can take place.

VL80 is on the way to becoming complete for test runs. It has a very different cab design that has been spoken about in previous editions of Locolines. The main achievement for drivers is what we are calling the 'crash cab'. It puts the driver back, 500mm out of the crumple zone. The "driver in crumple zone" theory is a legacy of a lack of our own safety cab standards.

These truly will become our long distance VL's, one which the Cab committee will put pressure on management to restrict our current VLs to shorter distance RFR/RRL runs only.

Once again, this is due to the current sub-standard cab design. It is believed that a buffet and sufficient luggage space will be also be incorporated in the long distance VL.

Latest news on VL80 onwards is an ergonomically redesigned power/brake controller handle in the design stages, twin windscreen wipers, cab side steps and other features such as a redesigned cab desk and buttons to improve our workplace.

Refresh

VL's 19-51 are part of a refresh program to bring the fleet in line with the PTV image. New carpets, seat covers, and external livery will be renewed. Cab committee agreed items such as powered mirrors and foot whistle were once again knocked back from the head of the V/Line funds

department. This, after it was agreed to include them.

This will be pursued in future endeavours to bring the standard of cabs in line with the rest. In the mean time, drivers are urged to continue their reports for shoulder injuries as a result of repeated, awkward, manual adjustment of clapped out mirrors.

Locomotive N468 and Sprinter 7007 have been on trial for new logger and speedo equipment for some time now. Feed back has been received to improve on what we currently have. The Loco clock has been a hot topic and a new, smaller red font has been sourced. Please take the time to make a comment on this for the cab committee. The rest of the fleet will begin to be retro fitted with this new equipment soon.

Sprinter secondary speedos have been costed and it is hoped the new equipment will aid PDT/ RDS roles to help prevent interventions.

Rusted out external whistle coves and number board bulkheads on N classes are among items to be addressed this Winter. Heavy rains see water and cold draughts enter the cabs in large amounts from these rusty openings. Please book as the faults arise.

Cab fumes have been an issue on the standard gauge. N457 has been subject of test runs to ensure rectification of fumes in the No1 cab. The in cab electrical cabinet is pressurised from the 'clean air' compartment. For some reason, exhaust fumes are recirculating into this 'clean air' and through to the No 1 end cab. If the seals on the cab doors, electrical cabinet, stop/reset buttons leak, fumes can enter the cab. When this fault arises, Carbon Monoxide testing is conducted, as well a check of cab seals. In the case of N457, an exhaust odour was still present after these checks. On N457, it was found that ICE radio conduits under the cab floor from the clean air compartment played a role in fumes entering. The only way to ensure rectification is by a test run.

TALKBACK WITH HINCH

By Michael A Hinch

Passenger Sub-Division—Southern Cross

Fundamentally, Some Safeworking Fundamentals. For the Newbies.

If you are new to our industry, do not simply accept that a rule is a rule or a name is a name. Seek to understand WHY it is a rule and WHY it is called, that which it is called.

As an Instructor, I often find the new blood simply accepting, at face value, that a *Flidget* is a *Flidget* and they do not ask why it is called a *Flidget* and how it came to be called a *Flidget*.

In Safeworking Parlance, for example, the word "Block" is often used, as in Double Line BLOCK or Automatic Block System. But what does it mean? This is one of the *Flidgets* I am referring to. To answer, let's break it down to some basics. As with all Safeworking principles, they have always started with basics.

In the beginning, long before our Sparks and Diesel Locos etc. there was the power of steam. A clever chap named Stephenson in England realized that, if correctly harnessed, steam could be the means by which great lifting power could be brought to bear upon a physical task. A means of traction which could haul or impel vehicles bearing weighty payloads never contemplated prior to this. "By the jingoes Stevo" declared his fans. "That's pretty impressive, but it's a heavy beastie, how are you going to steer it?" "Easy done" said Stevo. "We'll whack it on a road made out of iron rails. That should do the trick" he candidly replied. "Aha, so you are going to make a carriage way made of iron raila rail way?" You get the idea. A road made out of rails. A Railroad. In actual fact, Stephenson built his first locomotive by hand and designed a locomotive that he called the "Rocket," which won the Rainhill

trials, commissioned by the Liverpool and Manchester Railway to determine the best design to power their railway, but I digress. This part of history – course of events - was at the very inception of our craft and lay at the very heart of the Industrial Revolution.

This invention revolutionised transport. They no longer needed to solely depend upon horses to carry out passenger and goods hauling tasks. The lifting power of these machines meant that vast weights could be transported over great distances. Indeed, the power of many horses could be applied by just one of these machines. It was a Scottish Engineer named James Watt who coined the term "Horsepower" to describe this very outcome. (You can look that up.)

The first real problem with this fabulous newfangled means of transportation arose when the enthusiasts decided that if one locomotive hauling one train of vehicles was this good, just imagine how fantastic it might be if we had two, or three or dare we contemplate, many? The sky was the limit. That was the birth of the blues because the enthusiasts were just that. Enthusiastic. They pretty quickly learned that this enthusiasm could lead to trains actually developing the nasty habit of bumping into each other when more than one were deployed on the same Track Section. Read – Crashing. Very messy, often (usually) tragic and very expensive.

Necessity as they say, is the mother of invention. They had to find a means of **blocking** a train from entering an already occupied track section. Think about the terminology here. A means of - **blocking** – trains. In other words a "**Block System**." It then just fell to them to assemble the elements to facilitate this in a sequence of logic. It had to be understood by the driver of any train that he could not enter a Track Section until he was authorized. "How will we convey this message?" was the question. They needed to adopt a system of symbols or signs. Signals. They also needed dedicated people to be in control of these Signals. Signalmen. (Signallers in today's more PC world.) For this, they turned to examples of Signalling systems already established and did not need to progress in their search beyond a concept developed by the British Admiralty. Semaphore Signalling was a British Naval standard practice.

The basic components:

A symbol that clearly illustrates STOP, by day and by night. Traditionally, outstretched human arms represented the human gesture meaning HALT. This is a horizontal gesture, hence semaphore signals at the stop position are horizontal. The internationally accepted colour for danger has always been red, because it is the colour of blood. Once that was established they needed a means of communication between

the Signallers at each end of the Track Section. Around this time, a fellow named Samuel Morse invented a device known as the Telegraph. Essentially it was a means of sending electrical impulses along a dedicated wire which could be interpreted into words by a pattern of "Dots and Dashes." Clearly the dots and dashes would be too cumbersome to facilitate effective communication between the Signal Boxes and the immediacy of the communication demanded the instant attention of the Signaller. The answer they came up with was the "Block Instrument" which is essentially just a machine that goes – Ping (Sorry Monty Python)...Ding, in response to the aforementioned electrical impulses being sent along the "Block Telegraph" wire. A loud ringing bell gets your attention and it really wasn't difficult to establish a pattern of bell codes which had various meanings.

So then there we had it. A signalling system which **blocked** a train from entering an already occupied section and this could be established by the definite communication between the Signal Boxes. A Block Section is only defined at any one time by the Signal Boxes which are open. There could theoretically be just one Signal box at each end, with or without a station and no others in between or as many stations as you please in between the open Signal Boxes. However, there soon arose another problem. There is some conjecture as to exactly which accident finally highlighted the need for a response to the problem of identifying "Train Arrived Complete." Scenario – A Signaller observes a train arriving at his end of the Track Section and communicates this information to the Signaller in the rear. What he doesn't realize is that the train had for some reason become divided in the section and had not arrived complete. The Signaller in the rear

happily gives "Line" to the following train which is blissfully unaware of the impending collision. Ultimately, it was determined that the only safe way for the Signaller to be absolutely certain that the train had arrived complete and that the section was clear was by the application of a symbol which marked the end of the train. Until he sighted the **Tail Disc** by day or the red **Tail light** by night, he could not signal another movement or communicate with the Signaller at the opposite end of the section. I am uncertain as to the exact origin of the concept of the white circular shaped tail disc, but it certainly worked a treat and is still used today.

With all of this in mind, consider why the normal position of a Starting signal is the stop position. It is because a train is **BLOCKED** from entering a section until that track section is clear. It cannot start a train into an occupied section until it is placed away from its normal position. It is doing its job by **BLOCKING** a train, before it **STARTS** the train.

At this point, the rail world was fairly happy but it eventually became impatient with the concept of one train in one section at a time and looked for ways to increase the volume of traffic. The Track sections were too long and it was too costly to simply open up smaller Block Sections so there arose a need for an improved, but safe means of achieving this. In 1872, an Irish born American inventor named William Robinson came up with the answer. He determined that he could further harness the power of this newfangled electricity stuff to solve the problem. You know, the same electricity stuff that controlled those clever Block Instruments. In order to exist as a moving entity, electricity requires a path to follow. It is known as a circuit. Robinson reckoned that steel rails were such good

conductors of electricity, that if he were to send a low voltage pulse from a battery and backed it up with a system of insulators, along one rail and then cross it over to the other rail and send it back, he could create such a circuit. A **TRACK CIRCUIT**. Locomotives and their wheels and axles were made of steel as well, so when the leading axle of the loco intruded onto the track circuit, it "Short Circuited" the system. Hence, he was able to link this to a means of prompting the signal to automatically detect the presence of the train and cause it to revert to the stop position. Think about that, the signal operated automatically. It was an **AUTOMATIC SIGNAL**. So, new chums, when your studies in Safeworking tell you that an Automatic Signal is used to cut long sections up into short sections so as to facilitate the increased traffic/passage of trains, that is what it means and that is why it is defined in this way. That is how Track Circuits work. Today we increasingly employ Axle Counters to achieve the same outcome. Track Circuits are however still very much at the heart of our rail system. I reiterate; do not simply accept any givens. Seek to understand why and how.

Not enough sharing – the Job Share Dilemma.

One single day in a busy rail system like ours, can be a long time in terms of incidents, system changes, notifications, rule changes, speed restrictions and the like. Four, six or eight weeks can be an eternity. Typically, these are the lengths of time enjoyed by Job Share Drivers at the V Place. Changes and alterations to the actual rail system can and do occur on a daily basis. Yes, they are documented and placed on the email system. No argument there. Often the details of changes are placed into the individual file of each Driver or posted on notice boards. Let us

accept that at least one change happens in some area that affects our job, each day. Just one a day. Over the course of eight weeks that is a minimum of fifty six changes. We all know of course, that there are always more changes than that and often in these times of infrastructure projects and the like, the changes can be substantial. And then, sometimes the changes can be just as important, but very subtle. It is easy to be “*caught out unawares*” at the best of times, let alone after a lengthy period of time away from the job, whether it is on annual leave or long service or indeed, job share. The fact remains, long service leave is not a frequent occurrence and annual leave is just that, it happens once a year. Job share happens at regular intervals, regularly. People are left outside “*the loop*” on a rostered basis for many weeks at a time. These people are displaced from the availability of the information that they need to SAFELY do their job, on return to work.

It is a fact that, upon return to work after any lengthy absence at the V Place, a Driver simply signs on at the allotted time, reads his/her roster, is given no allotted extra time to re familiarize, no extra time to read the company emails, no extra time to catch up on eight weeks of weekly notices, no extra time to peruse the notice boards....NUTHIN’ ... Not a sausage! Just sign on and get to your train completely unarmed. Is that really entirely reasonable? I would argue not. For crying out loud, you’ve been off the planet for eight bloody weeks. Surely you need some catch up time. Surely you need the opportunity to consult the Training and Compliance centre for some guidance. Perhaps talk to a Supervisor about any important updates. Surely you need to be given the opportunity to do your job SAFELY. Surely the safety of the traveling public demands this. *Just sayin’*

Stick it on the Turntable, shut it down and handbrake it. My Swansong.

My time (in this wonderful industry) is nigh. Every old fossil should know when it is time, to simply go and sit in the Fireman’s seat, boil the billy and take charge of the automatic staff exchanger. Let a youngster sit behind the throttle and show you what they can do. With any luck, you may have passed on some good habits and train handling skills to the next gen. How to stretch brake through the *hit and miss* undulation. How to *spot stop* without braking an egg shell. How to do it right. How to apply these ideals in both Traction Operations practical reality and metaphorically as a Union activist. The late and wonderful comrade, Chris Clarke once said to me (when we were both young Union activists about a millennia ago) “Michael, these old bastards have had their go. Now it’s our turn.” And indeed it was. And what a ride it was. Calling out an injustice, fighting the good fight and always standing up for your workmates in a stoush with Management. And that very much describes the great man that Chris was.

Over the years, when I would attend a retirement function, I would always make a point of asking the retirees for their advice from an *Old Feller* at the end of his career, to a young feller in the middle of his. I had many responses but the common theme was “stick by your Union and your Workmates and believe in the power of superannuation.” The most interesting and indeed entertaining response I ever solicited came from a fabulous old Driver named Greg Cassidy. A lovely chap. When I asked that question, he thought about it for a moment or two and with a very serious look on his dial he said “Power on the straight lad, brake on the curves and throw your timetable

in the bin. You’ll start when you start and you’ll get there when you get there and in between – *go like f**k.*”

It is now my turn to pass on advice to the next generation and allow me to opine that I agree with all of the sentiments of my predecessors. But I will add to it with my own take. Be a professional Engineman. (This term is not gender specific) Take some pride in your ability and your skills and your knowledge base. Seek to expand them at every opportunity. Forty three years ago a wise old Driver once said to me, “you are going to learn something new on this job every day of your career.” And he was absolutely correct. This old feller was my very first Instructor as a *Lad Junior Trainee Engineman* in 1976. His name was Ken Haines and he was a true gem of a man and a truly skilled Engineman. He then gave me the golden rules that all Enginemen should follow:

1/ Look after your job – stick by your Union.

2/ Look after your Workmates – make certain that you have left the workplace safe and clean for the next bloke.

3/ Look after your Loco. Take care of it – We are not here to damage the equipment and anyone who does should be ashamed of themselves.

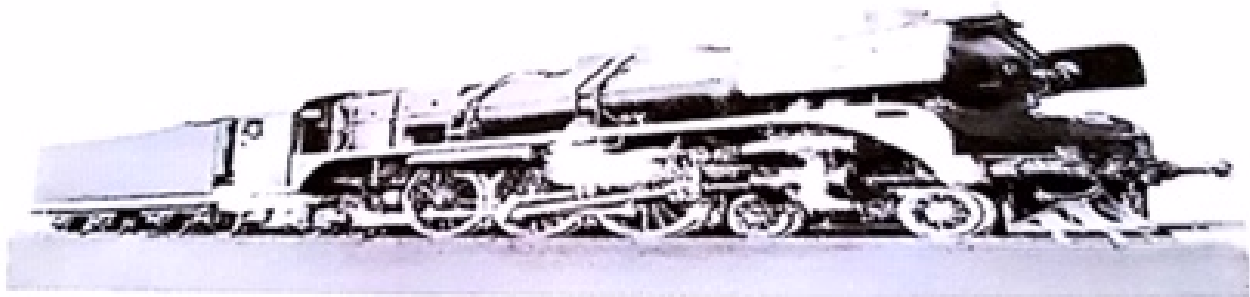
and

4/ “If you F**k up, own up!”

Well youngsters, comrades, I hope you take heed and carry these ideals through your career. Wishing you all “Top Greens down the grade.”

Michael A. Hinch
Talkback

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GOULBURN VALLEY
RAILWAYMEN'S REUNION 2019.**



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Memories of the Alexandra & Mansfield line

By: Adrian Ponton

In 1973, the Easter holidays and Anzac Day merged to allow a 6 day holiday for most Victorians.¹ The main focus of the railway enthusiast community was the Melbourne Steam Festival, the highlight being the first ever visit of two NSW 38 class locomotives from Sydney. Michael², a former school colleague, and I headed off to Yea on Tuesday evening the 24th April knowing that we could travel to both Alexandra and Mansfield on the Wednesday.

For many years, goods trains to Alexandra were scheduled twice weekly. By the early 1970's it was usually on a Wednesday and a Saturday. Extra trains ran as required to cater for the 'superphosphate season' and the 'wool season' between Tallarook and Yea and even between Yea and Mansfield, but two trains a week were adequate for Alexandra traffic.³ Passenger services (a mixed train) on the Alexandra line were withdrawn on 29th October 1945.

Easter had disrupted the normal train pattern on these Goulburn Valley lines. In fact, the goods train to Alexandra on Easter Saturday did not run and there had not been a goods train between Melbourne and Yea over the entire Easter period. Only the daily rail motor service had been operating, running for passengers and parcels on the Mansfield line. On Tuesday 24th April the 6.40 p.m. Melbourne Yard – Yea goods ran and this restarted the regular goods train services on the branches.

The timetable for the Alexandra goods on Wednesday 25th April was altered from the normal Wednesday schedule (3.00 a.m. departure from Yea) and we waited for the Rail Motor from Mansfield to arrive before departing Yea. The rail motor was a Walker 280 Horse Power unit, 80 RM, which arrived at Yea at 08.05 a.m. and departed for Tallarook and Melbourne at 08.08 a.m.

The Alexandra goods departed Yea at 8.12 a.m. and was hauled by T 360 and included 5 loaded wagons for the Mansfield line along with 4 loaded wagons for Alexandra and the usual ZL guards van on the rear, an estimated load of =10 for 195 tons. We arrived at Cathkin at 8.54 a.m. and the Mansfield loading was shunted to No. 3 Road.

The reason for running the Mansfield loading through to Cathkin was no doubt linked to the normal schedule for the Wednesday Goods. At this time of the year it usually ran from Yea to Alexandra, returned to Cathkin and then proceeded to Mansfield before returning to Yea. However, with Wednesday the 25th April being a Public Holiday, the Cathkin – Mansfield – Yea legs of the service was not scheduled to run.

To hold the loading over at Yea for the Thursday train would have congested Yea's small yard. Considerations for getting the Mansfield line loading out of the way to Cathkin included:

- a) Simplified any shunting needed at Yea with the return of the train from Alexandra.
- b) The train's subsequent departure to Tallarook and Melbourne at 7.50 p.m. (a later schedule to cater for the 4.45 p.m. Mansfield - Melbourne extra rail motor)
- c) The expected arrival of the loading from Melbourne at 11.35 p.m.
- d) And the 380 ton maximum load between Yea and Cathkin for a T class locomotive.

The train departed Cathkin at 9.12 a.m. and arrival at Alexandra was at 9.52 a.m. One thing we noted arriving at Alexandra was the Station Master no longer occupied the station building on the platform but had an office on the end of the goods shed. The spacious station building had been taken over by the local community. At the time I recalled a similar situation existing at Bright.

Michael and I walked down the 'street' to find something to eat. Our progress was disrupted when we arrived at Grant Street as the Anzac Day march was in full swing and we were unable to cross the road to get to the 'Take Away' shop. After this unplanned detour, 'as we went the long way round' to avoid disrupting the march, we returned to the station where the crew were shunting the yard in preparation for the return to Yea. They had taken a meal break before we departed at 11.42 a.m. with T 360 hauling 11 empty fixed-wheel vehicles with the ZL van on the tail.

Progress was steady and line speed was easy to maintain, despite the grades, as the trailing load was

1. Until the 'Kennett Era', when many public holidays were abolished, Easter Tuesday was a 'bank holiday' in Victoria.
2. Michael pursued a career with the Commonwealth Public service, ultimately becoming an air traffic controller. He died in February 2016.
3. During the construction of the Eildon Reservoir and again during the 1950's with the expansion of the Eildon facilities, Alexandra was the railhead for the majority of these works. During this period there were extra goods trains along with provision for switch trips between Koriella and Alexandra. However, after the completion of these works, two trains a week was more than adequate

only 133 tons and a T class through load was 380 tons. We ran through Cathkin with only a slight reduction in speed whilst the Assistant Station Master conducted the staff exchange with the Fireman. Arrival at Yea was at 1.03 p.m. after a 1 minute delay at the Up Home Signal, no doubt to give the gate-keeper sufficient time to swing the hand gates across what is now known as the Melba Highway but at the time would have been known as Murrindindi Road.

Michael and I had less than a half hour to wait before catching the Mansfield Rail Motor, an extra service for the holiday. This service had left Spencer Street at around 11.45 a.m. and arrived at Yea at 1.32 p.m. before departing at 1.35 pm with 9 passengers on board. This service was run by RM 64, a Diesel Electric Rail Motor.

With stops at Cathkin (safeworking), Yarck (parcels) and Bonnie Doon (safeworking and parcels) arrival at Mansfield occurred at 3.27 p.m. The return service departed Mansfield at 4.47 p.m. and with 17 passengers on board, stopped at Bonnie Doon and Cathkin for safeworking before arriving at Yea at 6.24 p.m. where Michael and I detrained to return by road to Melbourne and home.

To clarify some anticipated questions, Station Staff were on duty at Yea (all day), Cathkin (until the returning goods had cleared), Alexandra (half a day) and Mansfield. The extra rail motor service to Mansfield was run by two rail motor drivers. One drove from Spencer Street to Yea whilst the other driver filled the roll of 'Rail Motor Guard'. At Yea they swapped roles and the 'Guard' was handed a bunch of keys by the Yea Stationmaster to access all the station buildings Molesworth – Maindample inclusive. Safeworking at Cathkin and Bonnie Doon was carried out under 'guard in charge conditions'

Rail Motor Services

Mixed trains tended to run on the branch lines in the 1930's and 1940's. The Tallarook – Yea and Yea – Mansfield services at times were supplemented or augmented with rail motor services. With the regular disruptions to service frequency and reliability during WWII, support waned. In October 1945, the passenger services were recast. The passenger accommodation on the Alexandra services was removed and that train service was changed from a mixed to a goods. (I suspect passengers found it more convenient and faster to travel on the direct bus service along the Maroondah Highway than plod along on the mixed train. The Mansfield mixed services were replaced by a Leyland Rail Motor. At least this offered a faster service than the mixed train it replaced although the 'comfort' may have been questionable.

With the introduction of the Walker Rail Cars in 1948, the Mansfield service was upgraded to a 153 h.p. Diesel Rail Car and Trailer. A loop siding was provided at Yea to enable the 153 h.p. DRC drop off the trailer on the down and 'pick it up' on the next morning's Up service. By the early 1960's it was usual for a 280 h.p. Diesel Rail Car to run this service.

An attempt to introduce a Sunday excursion train to Yea in 1959 was not successful, but at the start of the 1960 'snow season' the Sunday Excursion Train (a Diesel Rail Car) was running to Mansfield. I recall, that in the late 1960's the most popular services were the Saturday morning Up and Saturday evening Down services. These catered for country people wanting to see a VFL (as it was) game in Melbourne. During the snow season, the Friday night down service and the Sunday night up service were also well patronised.

Additional trains, usually rail motors, ran to cater for students attending Timbertop. In addition to Friday afternoon 'end of term' and Monday morning start of term extra services, for some holidays, such as Labour Day, Queens Birthday and Easter Tuesday a 'lunchtime service' from Melbourne returning as an early evening service from Mansfield were usual. These 'Timbertop' services continued right up until the end of the passenger service.

Manning of railcars in the 1960's was an interesting arrangement. A single car (102 HP DRC, 153 h.p. DRC or a DERM) could operate 'driver only' on branch lines. A 280 HP DRC, with or without a trailer, any rail car hauling a trailer, van or goods vehicles required a guard.

As the service continued and DERM's and Tulloch rail cars appeared in preference to 280 h.p. DRC's, the conductors were relieved of their 'burden' and the Mansfield service ran '2 man to Yea' and then only the driver between Yea and Mansfield. From memory, I believe the Seymour guard arrived and departed Yea in a taxi.

Safeworking in the 1960's

At the start of the 1960's the Mansfield line was electric staff throughout.

The sections were Tallarook – Yea, Yea – Cathkin, Cathkin – Bonnie Doon and Bonnie Doon – Mansfield. The electric staff system had replaced train staff and ticket in 1912. In the mid-1960's (post 1965 – I have date recorded somewhere the electric staff system was removed and train staff and ticket re-instated between Yea and Mansfield. Tallarook – Yea remained electric staff. Composite staffs were available for the Tallarook – Yea section to allow follow on moves with Kerrisdale being used as an intermediate block post. I experienced this once. I was on a special rail motor (return of the Timbertop train) on the Up being followed by the goods. We travelled on 'Ticket A'.

Given the costs associated with maintaining the aerial lines, I can understand why the electric staff system was removed concurrent with dieselisation. Post dieselisation there were fewer extra trains and the only 'tricky bit' being Tallarook – Yea which remained electric staff.

Staff exchange boxes existed at Cathkin and Bonnie Doon. But under 'guard in charge/driver in charge' the crews were issued with keys to the station office, as they needed to go into the building to ensure any parcels were secure.

Cathkin was 'attended' for the Alexandra goods. But I recall Jim Dunn the ASM retiring and not being replaced possibly about 1974. Cathkin could be worked 'unattended' for Mansfield trains. However, if a train ran to/from Alexandra a 'competent person' was required. (I do not recall if the person came from Alexandra or Yea. I suspect the latter.)

There were composite staffs in the electric staff days for the Yea – Cathkin (with Molesworth as the block post), and Cathkin – Bonnie – Doon (with Merton as the block post).

In 1960 Tallarook, Yea, Alexandra and Mansfield had Stationmasters in charge. Bonnie Doon and Cathkin were managed by Assistant Stationmasters. Caretakers were in place at Kerrisdale, Homewood, Yarck, Merton and Maindample. Trawool, Cheviot, Kanumbra and Woodfield were NC (No-one in charge). Koriella was also NC. This did not change until after the rail motor service was withdrawn, at which time there was a cull. All the caretaker stations became NC and 'support' staff positions at Yea and Mansfield were abolished.

Postscript

When we planned our trip to Alexandra and Mansfield, the Victorian Railways was functioning over the holiday period much the same as it had every year post WWII, the significant change being the introduction of diesels to replace steam locomotives. This impacted on these branch lines in late 1965 and reduced the number of 'Rolling Stock Branch staff required at Yea. Additionally, the 'tea stall' at Yea was no longer required for its original purpose and was now in use as the crew room. Another disruption to services was the January 1969 bushfires which caused considerable infrastructure damage between Cheviot and Kanumbra.

However, what we did not realise was that major changes were only a few years away. The catalyst for change was the report completed by Sir Henry Bland in 1972 and titled 'Report of the Board of Inquiry into the Victorian Land Transport System'. It recommended a complete restructuring of the rail business in Victoria and in the context of this article, advocated the complete abandonment of the railway from Tallarook to Mansfield and Cathkin to Alexandra.

Despite the uncertainty of the future of the railway a curious upgrade occurred at Yea when the two sets of hand gates were replaced with flashing lights in 1976, Flowerdale Road in May and Murrindindi Road in August. Whilst these works were initiated by the Road Authority and were linked to road upgrades, the new equipment saw very little use, as the railway declined and services became less frequent shortly after they were commissioned.

The demise of the rail motor service was somewhat like an unfortunate episode of Monty Python. The first rationalisation occurred when the Class 1 Conductors (who ran as the 'Guard' on this service) embarked on a roster dispute over the Saturday Night Melbourne –

Mansfield and Sunday Night Mansfield – Melbourne services. Their claim was they were being financially disadvantaged by the Mansfield roster as it precluded them running on the Overland, Southern Aurora or Spirit of Progress where they were on duty for longer hours. The next issue was the deteriorating track condition and in 1976 and 1977 the service was often terminated at Yea and taxis utilised to convey passengers for the remainder of the journey.

The last run of the Mansfield rail motor service was on Friday 27th May 1977 when 280 HP Walker Diesel Rail Car No 91 left Spencer Street for Mansfield. The return service left Mansfield on the morning of Saturday 28th May. The coordinated bus service commenced on Monday 30th May 1977 and ran (initially via Yarra Glen) to Yea and then through to Mansfield.

The goods services continued until the establishment of Freight Centres at Benalla and Seymour on Monday 6th February 1978. Once the road delivery contracts were in place, the services on the line became 'as required for wagon load traffic only'. A further complication was during the summer months of 1977/1978 trains ran in the cooler hours to avoid fire risks. Finally, with contracts for livestock haulage and bulk superphosphate storage in place, the line closed.

The last train to Alexandra ran on October 23rd 1978 and to Mansfield on November 6th 1978. On November 8th 1978 the lines from Tallarook to Mansfield and Cathkin to Alexandra were closed to all traffic. The last trains placed 'off register' GY and RY (fixed-wheel open wagons) at some locations to become 'superphosphate bins'. This enabled 'a seamless service' to continue for the superphosphate spreading contractors at these locations –despite there being no trains! Steam locomotive J 512 was also delivered to Alexandra prior to the last train. (Subsequently it was recovered and is now undergoing restoration at the Seymour Rail Heritage Centre.)

In the mid-1980's the rails were lifted and nature gradually started to reclaim the rail reserve. The Alexandra Timber Tramway and Museum took over the Alexandra station precinct and now operate regular services utilising a variety of 2' gauge equipment.

Following the devastating February 2009 bushfires, funding was made available to create a rail trail along the former rail corridor. This opened in June 2012. Once again, people are able to enjoy this part of the Goulburn Valley at a leisurely pace, including the steep grades, sharp curves, bridges along with the Cheviot tunnel, even if the propulsion is a push bike. Some of the railway infrastructure has survived more than 40 years of indifference with goods sheds, station buildings, whistle boards, speed boards, mile posts and the occasional telephone pole remaining as icons.



Nelson's Column.

By Ernie Nelson V-Line Southern Cross Station.

This column contains poisonous libels and vitriolic slanders, colourful language, nudity, violence, and smut of a general nature and anything else that helps sell Magazines, if you don't like it hit the road Mate! Email me at booze.up@myplace.com.au or call toll free 1800 SOD ORF. Any similarities between depicted and real events and people in some sections of this column is purely coincidental, so suck it up Princess, get over it, use this as therapy and get on with your life, Sport.

Bone Pointing Bastards.

I'm wondering what would occur if I was to point the bone at someone and make an accusation against another employee which later proved to be completely unsubstantiated, I should imagine I would be stood down and ultimately terminated for such conduct, well you'd think so wouldn't you?

Well the reality is the target of your calculated attempt to trash their career is stood down on pay sometimes for up to a year in one case, while the authors of such unprofessional conduct are free to work including overtime, and when the dust settles they suffer no consequences for their actions. If you were to bear false witness in a court of law, you'd get banged up quicker than you could apply the Vaseline.

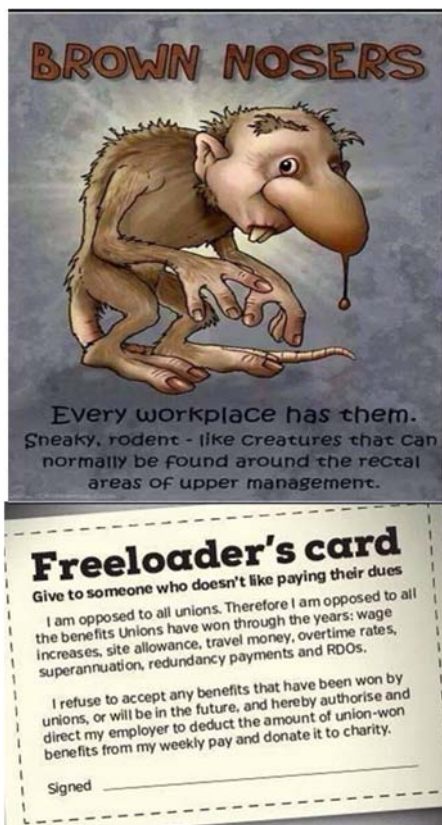
Metro Appointed Committees.

Why on Earth are Drivers at Metro agreeing to be on Metro Appointed work groups against the advice of the Loco Division, we've already seen the result of sycophants doing signal sighting with the 3rd rate job between Dandenong and Pakenham East, what with the "Homermatic" at Hallam on the down platform, not to mention the amateurish co actors at Berwick.

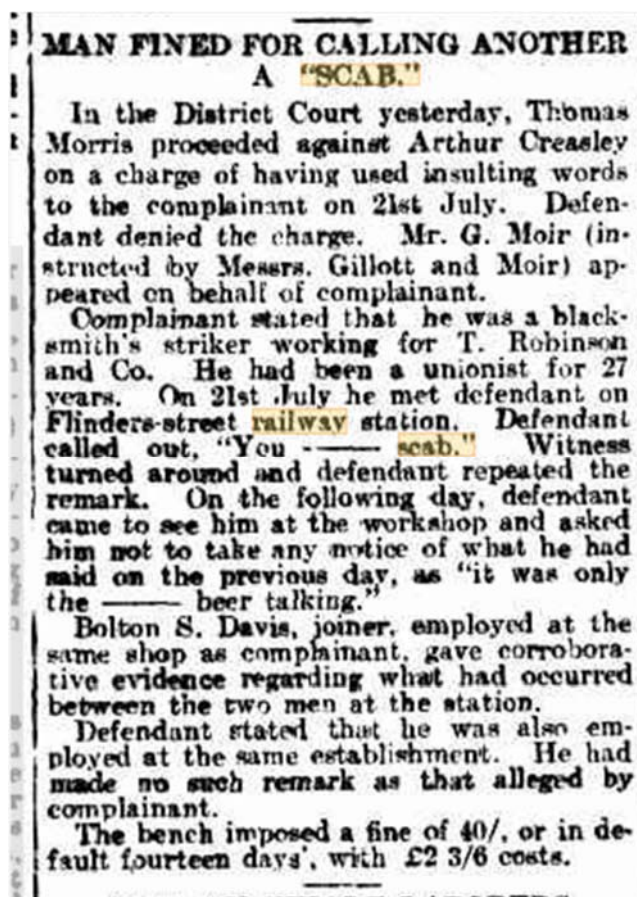
Metro are playing you for mugs and some of your co workers who have contacted me think you are scabbing on them and rorting the system to get out of driving revenue trains.



Of course, under freedom of association you are free to do that as I am free to have my opinion of what you are and what you are doing to your grade.



Check out the fine and costs.



Lunch Time Entertainment.



A boxing match at Eveleigh Workshops in Sydney N.S.W. probably late 1940s early 50s. it was a completely different world back then. I started on the job in 1974 and you never ratted or gave the bosses an inch coz they'd take a mile and jam it in your bum.

Sorry the column was a bit light on this time round, but I hope you all find it entertaining and informative

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

EUGENE XAVIER

28/9/1954—11/3/2019

Aged 64 years.



Survived by his loving wife Suzanne. Eugene was the adored father to Stephanie, Cassandra and Reuben. Cherished brother of Teddy, June, Colin, Pam, and Elvis.. Passed away on 11th March 2019 with his family by his side. May he rest now!

Dear Mark,

As I will be retiring from Metro Trains as of the 19th January, 2019, I will also be resigning from the Union, as of the same date.

I wish to thank you Mark, and the rest of the team for all the help and support you gave me over the years.

Keep up the good work and all the best for 2019.

On behalf of my wife Suzanne, children Stephanie, Cassandra, Reuben and myself, we wish to thank you, officials at the Union office, all my co-workers of various departments, both at Flinders Street and outstations, for your generous contributions.

Yours sincerely,

Eugene Xavier and family



We Remember
GRANT DICKINSON RAMAGE
13 December 1953 - 15 December 2018

Vale Dr. Grant Ramage.

By now we all know Doc Ramage has passed away quite suddenly last December.

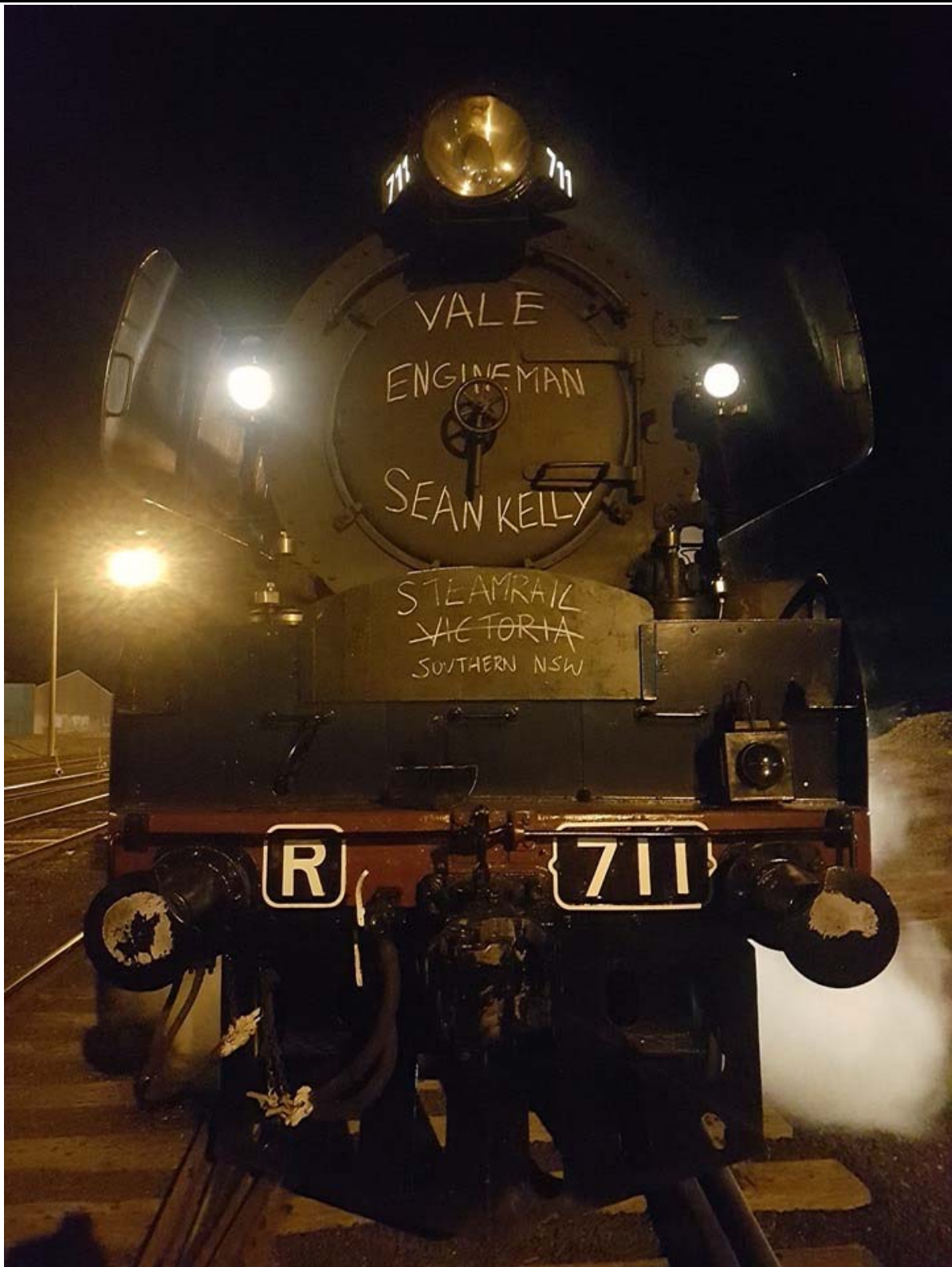
We all know a good story or two about Doc and he will be sorely missed by Loco Grades. Our condolences to his family and friends.

- Ernie Nelson

Dear Marc,

I'd like to mention 3 retired drivers that have now passed on; Alan Davis passed away on 28/5/17 aged 82 and Ken Vivian on 2/3/18 aged 79, both from Traralgon. John David (Dave) Scott, aged 82 Belgrave, who started his second stint in late 1964 and retired on 20/12/96, and passed away on 21/2/19, 82 years old.

Cheers, W J (Bill) Scott, ex Traralgon.



KELLY , Sean William Clyde

Aged 52 years.

Beloved son of Coralie and Patrick (dec). Brother of Peta.

Loving father of Iarnan.

Dearest friend of Trevor.

He reached the end of the line.

(Photo by: Lachlan Hinds)

RETIREMENTS , RESIGNATIONS AND DEPARTURES

Dear Marc

I am writing to advise that I will be retiring from V/Line on 12/7/19.

I would like to thank the union for all your support in the 43 years as a member as well as 10 years as cab committee co-ordinator at V/Line.

I wish you and the membership all the very best in the future.

I am Cashill

Dear Wayne

As I am retiring on 22/6/19, it's with regret I'll have to resign from the Union on this day.

I would like to thank all the delegates throughout my 39 years on the railways for their help and support!

Yours Sincerely
Malcolm Walter

Happy Retirement Ken Walker and Mick Scott

On Saturday 8th of December we had a retirement send off at the Morwell RSL for Mick Scott and Ken Walker who both retired on the 2nd of July this year.

On the Friday before we had a bit of a send off at Traralgon depot at the end of Mick's last shift and got quite a few of the retired Eastern District drivers in for the day. The function at Morwell was an enjoyable one with friends and family there to wish the retiree's well in their new "careers" hunting and fishing and "doing the wallaby" with the rest of the grey nomads! It has been a pleasure working with these blokes, Mick was my permanent swap sparing me the indignity of having to work day shift for several years as well as being branch president. In that time we definitely had more losses than wins, but that probably made the victories that little bit sweeter! Kenny was always the light entertainment in Traralgon, and I have fond memories of firing for him on the Dandy pilot back in the 1980's. I should point out that I did all my firing from the drivers seat! On behalf of everybody in the Eastern District I wish these two dinosaurs all the best for a long and happy retirement.

It's been great working with the both of you.

- Rob Morgan
Traralgon



Above – Ken Walker and Mick Scott receive their plaques

Left –Ken and Mick on Micks last shift

Below –The good ol' boys!



*I am resigning from the Union as of 30th June 2019 .
I would like to thank Marc for all his work and help over
the years.*

Thank you—Matthew J Wilson

Dear Mark,
As I am retiring on 28/2/19 please accept my resignation. I wish to thank
the Union for all it's help and support over my 40 years of service. I also
wish the Union and all its members all the best for the future.,
Colin Watson

Dear Marc.

As the 5th of July approaches, so does the curtain being drawn on my
career in this wonderful industry. But I gotta' tell ya, it aint easy walking
away after 43 years. But a greater calling lies before me as a full time
Carer. It is customary for those of us heading into retirement to resign
from the Union. I have thought long and hard about this and come to
the conclusion that I do not want to create that disconnect. So, with the
indulgence of the organization, it is my wish to remain a proudly paid
up member of the RTBULD. In some respects, it is my way of giving
back to the organization that has "saved my onions" on more than one
occasion. My dues continue to assist the cause.

I would still like to have some kind of influence or voice. I am deeply
aware of the issue of credibility of the voice or opinion of those who
have left the industry and sought retirement, for those that are left
actively working. I am confident that my Talkback article would surely
therefore lack any kind of that necessary credibility. I think it has run its
course and I thank you for the opportunity to opine in writing in the
publication.

I do however have the alter ego, nom de plume TT Dynon whom
enjoys the opportunity to satirise the current situation. Of course, once
the 5th of July gets here, I no longer have to worry about suddenly
becoming unemployed through the agency of my written opinion.
Perhaps I could continue to be of service in this respect. There is also
my actual voice being present in the press. Letters written to the Editor
of newspapers or other publications can sometimes be very helpful to
a cause. That is an itch I still need to scratch. Rail and the cause of its
workers stills burns me and I am ready to help, but only if it is welcome
and if you give me some hints as to the subject matter. If you find that
you have need of an annoying, niggling voice creating some
interference or speaking to a subject of public interest, I reckon I will
stand by, ready to assist.

I offer my thanks for your leadership and in hope of future
correspondence and the further hope that there may be a role for an
Agent de Provocateur.

Regards
Michael A. Hinch
Locomotive Engineman / Erstwhile occasional Correspondent.

Dear Michael,

*Thank you for your letter and we wish you and everyone retiring from
the railways all the very best!*

*All members are welcome to remain as honorary members and
continue to make contributions if they wish.*

Marc Marotta

Have

your

Say!

I am a Tiger.

A caged Tiger.

I live in a small cage on the
North side of the zoo and all I do all day is pace up
and down along the same well worn paths. Up and down, up and
down. I know the paths so well that I don't actually think about
where I am going anymore, this is dangerous as occasionally
another tiger will lay down in an unusual spot and I may bump
into them if I am not paying attention.

My Master gives me 1 toy to play with, playing with the one toy all
day every day is very monotonous.

Sometimes I look out at my other tiger friends who live in the cage
on the South side of the zoo. Their cage is bigger so they have more
and longer paths, occasionally they get to actually run and go
really fast. Master gives them 3 different toys to play with, and
furthermore, just outside their cage to the East they can see a brand
new toy being slowly unpacked. I will not get to play with this new
toy.

Once upon a time I used to play with the tigers in the South cage, it
was good to stretch my legs and have variety. But not anymore.
Master says 'No more fun for you', I think he enjoys seeing how sad
me and my fellow North tigers are.

Occasionally when I put my bowl out for food it appears there is not
enough in it, I say to Master 'I don't seem to have the correct amount
of food for all the pacing up and down I have done'. He smiles and
says sorry, he doesn't really care as his tummy is always full.

Every now and then Master makes me get up really early for no
reason, the zoo is not yet open so there is no pacing up and down to
do. I just sit around wondering why he makes me get up so early.
Master never visits me at these times, he only comes to the zoo when
the sun is up, maybe he doesn't like the dark.

I must try to be a good tiger. If I do something bad Master will
punish me mercilessly to teach me a lesson so that I will not do it
again. He hopes this will stop other tigers from being bad too. It just
frightens me.

Some days I do not want to pace up and down all day, I want to lie
in my bed and sleep. I ask Master if I can not pace today, he says
'We have no other tigers to do the pacing if you don't do it' and
makes me do the pacing. Other days the pretty birds have a big
Carnival, every tiger has to pace on those days, no-one can sleep in
bed during the Carnival.

Oh well, I must get back to my pacing before Masters slaves the
vultures see that I am not going up and down. They would not like
that and may want to punish me.

Anonymous



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.