



# LocoLines

NEWSLETTER FOR LOCOMOTIVE  
ENGINE MEN OF THE RTBU VIC

Edition No. 74 • DEC 2019

**ARE YOU BEING  
TRACKED?!**

# LOCOLINES

## EDITION 74 DEC 2019

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**Publisher**  
Marc Marotta

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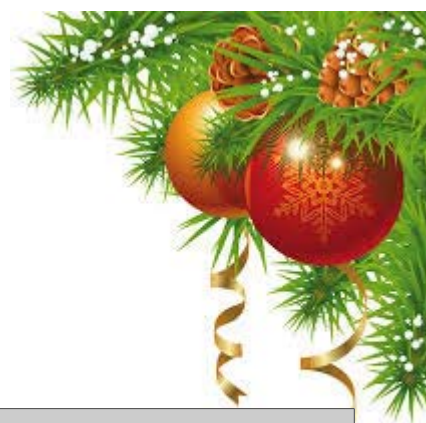
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# SECRETARY'S REPORT

By Marc Marotta  
Divisional Secretary



## Protect your privacy

**A** number of rail companies have been issuing company smart phones to its employees, these enterprises include Metro, V/Line and PN Rural and Bulk. It is a concern to the Locomotive Division that the companies believe that the employees time and activities in their off duty time is an area in which they can encroach just because our members have company smart phones.

It is lawful for a company to issue phones for use in company time whilst members are on duty, although there have been a number of examples of undesirable conduct of employers when members are off duty. It is more instructive to cite the companies conduct than any warning from the Locomotive Division. There are some examples of the conduct the companies have indulged in:

### Example 1.

A member was advised by one manager that they were not needed for any additional tasks and could go home. The member was then driving home in their car when another manager called them. The member explained to the manager that they were not at work and were on their way home and this manager responded "yes I know, you are on ...street"! This was in real time!

### Example 2.

A member reported off sick for four days, when they returned to work they were requested to attend a meeting with management about their sick leave. Management inquired why they were not at their home address in the northern suburbs but were in Sorrento for the four days. The answer was that the members was single and was convalescing at their parents address.

I am informed that owners of the smart phones, in this case the Rail Enterprises, can activate a phone even when it is switched off! They can record, listen to and they are able to track an individual and there is no capacity to switch off certain functions of the phone as some believe.

The Locomotive Divisional Committee met on the 12 November 2019 and have resolved to help protect our members from these intrusions into our member's private lives. The Faraday bag is a small fabric bag with a special pocket that fits a smart phone. When a smart phone is placed inside it, the reinforced fabric prevents all signals getting through: that is it stops tracking, spying and remote activation of the smart phone. The Locomotive Divisional Committee passed a resolution to supply Faraday

BELOW:

*The signal blocking Faraday Bag  
to be issued in the new year 2020*



bags, or as we refer to them 'a privacy protection bag' to all financial members of the Locomotive Division that have had company issued smart phones, to commence in the new year from the 6th January 2020. The Locomotive Division's only problem is sourcing sufficient numbers but we will get them.

It is stressed that when members are on duty they must comply with the company directions for the use of their company issued smart phone, but when members are off duty and wish to stop the possibility of the companies surveillance and other intrusions in your private life, put the company phone into the Faraday Bag to prevent the excessive and aggressive conduct that has been indulged in by some of the rail companies.

## PACIFIC NATIONAL

The Driver Only saga continues at PN. The PN negotiating team have been caught out maintaining other states have adopted Driver Only in various locations interstate. When we investigated it proved not quite right as PN portrayed. In Victoria PN Rural and Bulk has nominated N.R Class for Driver Only implementation from Maryborough to Geelong via Ararat. The section between Maryborough and Ararat was not relaid with heavy rail and it is a

result the N.R will have run at reduced speed not determined yet. A likely speed will be 40kph but locos can only have 5000 litres or less of fuel to travel that section.

The next requirement was to determine the load for a Driver Only train, the determining factor is the holding capacity of the locos on the ruling grade that the steepest section of the proposed route. PN Bulk had previously done testing over twenty years ago, the difference then was different locos and the use of cast iron brake blocks which were much more effective than the composite blocks now in use.

The holding test was done approximately 2-3 month ago, it failed spectacularly. The holding test is what load of the train the locos can hold with their park brakes only. This is important if the locos lose power and air.

The radio communication is also a matter to be resolved before Driver Only implementation and vehicle access beside the proposed route is not resolved either. This is essential should a driver become medically incapacitated for their extraction. The Locomotive Division must ensure that all these critical issues are resolved prior to any Driver Only implementation.

## Steely determination to defend against V/Line's attack on work conditions.

From Saturday December 7th 2019 the Locomotive Division, including myself, met with V/Line members, Train Drivers, at various V/Line depots (see pictures on pages 5 and 6) where we discussed the upcoming Protected Industrial action to be taken and the V/Line Enterprise Agreement.

We were very pleased with the great turn out of members at these meetings and of the outcome of the Protected Action Ballot. The Ballot was a vote by the members that they WANT to take industrial action, which came back with a strong message to V/Line management that **Members want to protect their hard earned conditions negotiated by their Union and that together we will stand against their attacks to eradicate conditions.**

While it has been a very busy time (as it always is) we will continue to negotiate in good faith and will do everything to make sure that our members are protected.

On the 5/12/19 Mr Pinder authored a message that is flawed and misleading. Like most V/Line publications, V/Line fails to mention the:

- **10 hour shifts lengths,**
- **the removal of public holidays or**
- **that V/Line wants to dictate when an employee can have Union representation,**
- **the removal of training standards (Vic Loco Driver), and**
- **removal of safety standards for brake examinations on trains!**

*Continued on page 7*

OPPOSITE FROM THE TOP:

*Bendigo on 7th December 2019, Traralgon on 8th December 2019, and Ballarat on Monday 9th December 2019. Turn the page for more pictures from our Member meetings at Geelong and Seymour.*



**Bendigo  
7/12/19**



**Traralgon  
8/12/19**



**Ballarat  
9/12/19**

*BELOW: V/Line Geelong Sub Divisional Member Meeting  
Tuesday 10th December 2019*



*BELOW: V/Line Seymour Sub Divisional Member Meeting  
Thursday 12th Dec 2019.*



## V/Line CEO's message to Employees

*Hello everyone*

*On Tuesday we were advised by the RTBU of their intention to undertake industrial action over the next couple of weeks.*

*This industrial action will primarily take the form of no trains being operated for a period of 24 hours on each of our main lines. Full details of the dates and locations of the industrial action can be found on the homepage of Engine Room or by clicking [here](#).*

*While we absolutely respect the rights of union members to undertake protected industrial action, it is deeply disappointing the RTBU has chosen to use industrial action to target regional workers and communities on the eve of the Christmas holiday period.*

*At the same time, it has been heartening to see the enormous efforts being made by many across the business to plan alternative coach arrangements while the industrial action is undertaken. This is a demonstration of the genuine customer focus for which V/Line is renowned across regional Victoria.*

*Despite the threat of industrial action, we have continued to negotiate with the RTBU in good faith. Even yesterday, we held a scheduled meeting with the Rail Ops Division of the RTBU and today we will meet with the Loco Division.*

*It is important to understand what we are and are not seeking to achieve during these negotiations. What's NOT for negotiation are allowances, annual leave, overtime, superannuation, grades or classifications or the vast majority of conditions currently existing in the agreement.*

*Given we are growing so fast, we need to modernise our business. Within our existing agreement there are a lot of constraints. For example, the agreement currently states the preparation time for a six-carriage VLocity is almost three hours.*

*What we ARE seeking to negotiate is the introduction of processes to review these sorts of time allocations and the resulting rostering arrangements. The agreement contains other examples of similar constraints which have remained unchanged for many years while the business and the technologies we use have substantially changed.*

*We firmly believe that by working together with the RTBU to address these constraints, we can find many ways to improve our productivity.*

*While we must adhere to Victorian Government wages policy, if we can find more examples of productivity improvement, it will boost our case to Government for a more favourable wages outcome.*

*We'll continue to keep you informed of developments in negotiations over the coming weeks and to stay up-to-date visit Engine Room and search working together.*

*James Pinder  
CEO*

## A Message to the CEO

*Thank you Mr Pinder for the big hearted magnanimous statement that respects the Union's right to take protected action. I remind the CEO that these rights are enshrined in law and not a gift from the CEO.*

*It is typical of the meaningless poppycock the CEO and V/line Managers indulge in. V/Line employees have to endure V/Lines vacuous claims of a just culture, but in reality V/Line*

*promote a vile, dirty and pernicious culture (just ask the recently sacked staff).*

*We only have to think back to the 2017-2018 Christmas period when V/Line attempted to bribe employees for their vote and how V/Line inflated the voting numbers by nearly 400 previously non-existent votes. We won't let that happen again.*

*What Mr Pinder also does not tell you is that the Locomotive Division has advised the current*

V/Line CEO and management, and the previous installations of CEO's and their management cronies since 2012, that the V/Lines order for new V/Locities was deficient and flawed.

The V/Locity train requires End of Train Markers (E.T.M), a technology that has been around since the 1980's in the rail industry in freight. The Locomotive Division advised that it should be installed retrospectively on the V/Locities that would result in a drastic reduction in preparation times, but we don't get anything close to the truth from Pinder and his mates.

The fact is that V/line management's ineptitude created the current situation and now V/line attempts to blame the Loco drivers for not cutting corners on safety on brake tests to cover up V/Line management's incompetence.

The V/Line CEO and the V/Line board are so badly out of touch with V/Lines most valuable asset; its workforce, that I believe this dispute will not end soon.

**- Marc Marotta**

***We hope everyone has a  
safe and happy Christmas  
and New Year.***

**The office will be closed from  
midday Friday 20th December  
2019 and we will see you all  
again when we open on Monday  
6th January 2020.**

**For urgent matters please contact  
us via email or your local  
representatives mobile.**

***Stay Safe everyone!***



***Intense discussions with members at the V/Line Bendigo Sub-Divisional Meeting on  
the 7th December 2019***



# ASSISTANT SECRETARY REPORT

By Jim Chrysostomou  
Divisional Assistant Secretary



## **Enterprise Bargaining**

### **Metro Trains Melbourne – Enterprise Bargaining**

Enterprise bargaining is on foot between the RTBU and Metro Trains for a replacement agreement. There have been some complications with the RTBU's ability to advance their claims because of Federal Court Orders that have been *allegedly* breached (see orders at the end of this article).

The Fair Work Act pursuant to section 413 (5) provides for the following:

***"FAIR WORK ACT 2009 - SECT 413***

*Common requirements that apply for industrial action to be protected industrial action*

*Compliance with orders*

*(5) The following persons must not have contravened any orders that apply to them and that relate to, or relate to industrial action relating to, the agreement or a matter that arose during bargaining for the agreement:*

- a) if the person organising or engaging in the industrial action is a bargaining representative for the agreement--the bargaining representative;*
- b) if the person organising or engaging in the industrial action is an employee who will be covered by the agreement--the employee and the bargaining representative of the employee.*

*No industrial action before an enterprise agreement etc. passes its nominal expiry date"*

In summary if any bargaining representatives fail to comply with orders that apply to them and relate to bargaining including protected action, will have the effect of any protected action becoming unprotected unlawful industrial action.

The RTBU is seeking to have the orders revoked '*nunc pro tunc*' (Latin: applies retroactively to correct an earlier ruling) and Metro's position is to seek prosecution and penalties against the State Secretary for the breaches and any costs that may have arisen as a result of the breaches.

The High Court decision for reference is between Esso Australia Pty Ltd v The Australian Workers' Union [2017] HCA 54. Below is an overview provided by Maurice Blackburn Lawyers on the ESSO case:

### **Summary**

On December 6, 2017, the High Court handed down a decision on protected industrial action in relation to section 413(5) of the Fair Work Act 2009 (FW Act). The High Court's decision means that, if a bargaining representative contravenes a Fair Work Commission order relating to industrial action, any subsequent industrial action organised for the same enterprise agreement will not be protected industrial action.

### **Background**

In June 2014, the AWU and Esso commenced negotiations for new enterprise agreements.

In early 2015, the AWU provided a number of notices of intention to take protected industrial action to support negotiations for the planned new agreements.

On 2 March the AWU notified Esso of a ban on "de-isolation of equipment." According to the AWU, the ban on "de-isolation of equipment" included a ban on "testing of equipment," "air freeing" and "leak testing" and AWU members stopped performing these tasks.

According to Esso, testing of equipment, air freeing and leak testing did not fall within the description of de-isolation of equipment and these bans were not protected industrial action.

On 6 March 2015, Esso obtained an order from the Fair Work Commission, under section 418(1) of the Fair Work Act 2009 (**FW Act**) to stop the organising of a ban on testing of equipment, air freeing and leak testing (**FWC Order**).

The FWC Order came into effect from 6.00pm on 6 March 2015 until 20 March 2015.

The AWU's ban on air freeing and leak testing, as well as a ban on the manipulation of bleeder valves to facilitate air freeing and leak testing, continued for a short time after the FWC Order had come into effect.

Esso applied to the Federal Court seeking a declaration that the AWU's contravention of the FWC Order meant that all subsequent industrial action organised by the AWU was not protected action because the AWU could not satisfy section 413(5) of the Fair Work Act 2009.

Section 413(5) is one of the common requirements for industrial action to be protected industrial action. The section states that a bargaining representative ***must not have contravened any orders that apply to them and that relate to, or relate to industrial action relating to, the agreement.***

Esso was unsuccessful in seeking declaratory relief in an application to the Federal Court and a subsequent appellate hearing in the Full Court of the Federal Court.

A majority of the Full Court upheld the primary decision to not grant a declaration on the basis that section 413(5) must relate to an order that is current and operative at the time of protected industrial action. The FWC order, made on 6 March 2015, was no longer in operation.

## High Court decision

Esso was granted special leave to appeal to the High Court.

The majority of the High Court found that the AWU's contravention of the FWC Order did fall within the scope of section 413(5) because this section applied to past contraventions of orders – not just orders that are current and operative – at the time of the industrial action.

According to the High Court, the AWU failed to meet the requirement in section 413(5) for the industrial action it organised after 6 March 2015, as part of Esso bargaining, to be protected industrial action. All industrial action from that time was not protected.

## Three take away lessons to avoid disputes about work bans during protected industrial action

- 1) Use normal English to describe the proposed industrial action in protected action ballot order applications and in the notices of the action that you provide to the employer.
- 2) If you must use a technical term use a definition that will be understood by the employer.
- 3) Once the FWC makes a decision under section 418 of the FW Act about the industrial action specified, seek advice, or if in doubt, withdraw the notice.

## V/Line Enterprise Bargaining

The V/Line passenger enterprise agreement is also being renegotiated for rail operations members including Locomotive Drivers. The V/Line network spans over regional Victoria and is a direct state government asset and managed corporation.

Learning from the decision of Deputy President Hamberger to suspend protected industrial action in 2018 for our New South Wales comrades that included a 24 hour stoppage and an overtime ban, at this time of writing, we are balloting our V/Line members to vote on stoppages of 24 hours on a *line by line* basis as an alternative to a full network stoppage.

The above minimises the risks associated with the threshold that Fair Work Commission determine on how great of an impact any proposed action is likely to have on the Victorian population.

All of the bargaining claims that V/Line have provided are related to Locomotive Drivers. Some examples are provided below:

- a) reduced driver training scheme;
- b) Introduction of a terminal operator that is not a locomotive driver but performs the work of a driver at a reduced rate and reduced conditions;
- c) Introduction of a part shift driver that will have lesser conditions than current part time drivers;
- d) Increased shift lengths to 10 hours.

With bargaining forecast to extend over a greater period than usual, we are committed to protecting and advancing the claims of Locomotive Drivers. The members have made it clear that protecting the conditions ought to be at the fore front of all bargaining meetings.

## Technology – High Capacity Metro Trains (HCMT)

The Victorian state government is investing an unprecedented amount of money into rail rollingstock and infrastructure with the biggest disappointment being that we as a Union will have to fight with the government and other trade unions who are putting their hands up to do train driving work!

In the suburb of Pakenham East a maintenance facility is currently being built and commissioned that was the subject of Greenfields negotiation of an enterprise agreement. In this agreement the Electrical Trades Union (ETU) and the Automotive, Food, Metals, Engineering, Printing and Kindred Industries Union (Victorian Branch) (AMWU) have agreed to drive trains. Metro Trains who is the custodian of the HCMT denies any involvement notwithstanding that the agreement was negotiated by former Metro managers and is covered by an interface agreement with Metro.

The Pakenham East Greenfields Agreement, under section 2 'Coverage and application' sub-section (b), states that employees are:

*'to perform train fleet asset maintenance services at the East Pakenham Maintenance Facility, Calder Park Light Services Facility and other nominated stabling facilities'*.

Example position description below from Greenfields Agreement.

<b>Train Maintenance Technician - Level 3 – MT3 (C8)</b>	<b>Single Skilled, Trade based</b>	<p>Employees at this classification are trade qualified (+12 months experience) and single-skilled, with either mechanical or electrical nationally recognised qualifications.</p> <p>Employees at this classification are required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Carry out preventative and corrective maintenance for which they are competent to perform, within designated depots.</li> <li>▪ Ensure maintenance is completed in a safe and compliant manner.</li> <li>▪ Perform &amp; control train movements within designated areas.</li> </ul> <p>Progression from MT3 to MT2 is dependent on completion of required additional competencies.</p>
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In effect this clause opens the door for train movements to be carried out by non-qualified drivers at other facilities and/or designated areas on the metropolitan network.

***This is an important issue that we will fight and continue to fight to protect the job security of Train Drivers!***

We have advised the National Locomotive Council that as a national union we need to do more on the interference from other unions and the impact that technology has on our members.





# PRESIDENTS REPORT

By: Wayne Hicks  
Divisional President

## Unity is key

It has been an extremely busy year for the union movement this year and with the rising complexity of issues that threaten to attack and strip member's rights, every attempt is made to protect our conditions and entitlements. It is imperative we remain strong and Unity is always key.

### Rule Book

The 2020 Victorian rule book is still ongoing with 70 meetings to date. Changes in RISSB management and the need for the new incumbents to catch up have caused considerable delays. Paris Jolly, Steve Cox and myself have been working with RISSB, Metro and VLine to work through rule book changes.

RISSB have been given a contract to start and complete the rule book by next year and are acting under the Department of Transport Victoria. A consultation rule book is to be delivered by February 2020 and the rule book is now not expected to be rolled out until 2021, due to Government cut backs. The major expense is the cost of training.



### Electronic Train Orders

Electronics Train Orders (ETO'S) are in the tendering process and Steve Cox and myself have been working through various issues associated with this process for the last 11 weeks. Some such issues are the end of train detection and the requirement of ICE radio displays to be adaptive for train orders (ETO'S), without losing the functionality that is required to run in non-electronic train order territory.

A new set of train order rules for ETO's is to be developed to meet the requirements of section 18 of the current Rule Book.

The first stage of ETO'S are scheduled to be implemented from North Bendigo to Denilquin and North Bendigo to Piangil in September 2020. At this time, there is no set date for a further roll out across the state.

### RTBU National Meeting

I attended this years National Locomotive Divisional meeting together with Vice President John Marotta and Vine Southern Cross Sub Divisional Secretary Howard Hand. We updated the National Delegates of the current situations affecting our members including the Metro and VLine Enterprise Agreements and Protected Industrial Action.

*With Christmas fast approaching, I wish to thank the members for their support and wish you and your families all the best for the festive season and a safe and prosperous New Year*

*LEFT: Victorian Locomotive Divisional Vice President John Marotta with National Locomotive Divisional Secretary Keith McMahon at the National Locomotive Divisional Meeting Sydney Nov 2019*

# V/LINE CAB COMMITTEE REPORT

By Karl Costanzo

V/line Cab Committee

You may have seen VL 80 around the traps a bit lately. It has been running around the network, collecting bogie data for Bombardier. This is to see what stresses the bogies are subject to, in all conditions, including crush loads.

It has enabled some drivers to have a look at our new VLocity cab. Drivers will notice the larger windscreen as the main change. The seating position is also set back to allow for frontal crash protection. Certain ergonomic changes that were demanded early in the design stages were not included. This has led to a commitment being sought for future builds, to include changes.

As more and more VLocity vehicles enter service, VLocity timetabled runs increase, it puts more and more exposure on the drivers. The shortcomings of the VLocity cab are taking their toll on driver injury and complaints. The problem areas are:

- Throttle design and position,
- whistle position,
- door button position,
- lumbar support and
- desk design.

Larger drivers may notice VL 80 onward has a larger desk cut out but this is the only thing that was altered.

There have been a number of issues with the new design that have had to be addressed. The main issues are: Cab access steps, dashboard and side windscreen panel glare issues, larger 1/4 side windows requiring tint. High and low note whistles are a new type and problems with reliable operation have been experienced.

A Windscreen manufacturing fault has required change outs on the first few.

The step issue should be resolved soon with a third design being accepted in principal. Due to the larger saloon door that it is set back further over the lead bogie, the step will be offset slightly from centre, with an extended side handrail and markings on the lino flooring to compensate for the design constraints.

Fridge, park brake buttons, and TPWS display have been relocated also. Dual windscreen wipers are fitted, one on either side of the screen. These are to be upgraded with more powerful motors as the current arrangement is too slow in moderate rain events.

Once these new vehicles are in service I believe drivers will appreciate the extra vision and safety these cabs will offer our drivers.



### Locos/Sprinter:

We are still awaiting rollout of the new type Hasler Data logger and related speedo. It's been about two years since the first trial, with the main issue to drivers being that the supplied clock is out of sync with the logger.

Loco Production units will have a more presentable and compact display housing that should not impede driver only vision/operation. Driver feedback on the Hasler display has so far been positive. It is has slightly larger and clearer display face.

Loco toilet mods: As of this writing, I have been advised V/Line are cutting costs in certain areas of the business and the toilet upgrade to include a new self contained commode, has been stopped. Of the 5 or so modified, these have shown to be easy to maintain and remain hygienic, without odours.

The toilet door itself was part of the upgrade and the main purpose was to include a knockout panel for emergency access, should the driver become incapacitated inside the compartment.

Electric hand brakes are another item to be cut from the funded list with only about 3 N classes left to fit. Y classes have been knocked back also.

Sprinter 7006 has had modifications to the air conditioning ducts to the drivers cab space. Feedback on the effectiveness of these mods during summer is requested.

To all members of the cab committee, thank you for your efforts throughout this year, to all RTBU members, have a Merry Christmas.



Thank you.  
Karl Costanzo.

## LOCO DIV SHOP



*Shop now*

[RTBUVICLOCO.COM.AU/SHOP](http://RTBUVICLOCO.COM.AU/SHOP)

# THE NEED FOR OUR 'OWN' CAB COMMITTEE

By Karl Costanzo

V/line Cab Committee

See if you will, this photo says many things about Victorian locomotive drivers. It captures the essence of locomotive driving, cruising along the open countryside, in a big 'S' class diesel. Eyes, ears and mind on the job, driver in traditional steam garb of engineman's hat and bib n brace overalls. Despite the heavy, open air labour of steam, this young person sports a fresh, pressed, clean shirt. It says that his role today is a cleaner, safer one thanks to the latest in diesel electric locomotive technology.

It is for him, a source of pride. Performing duty to the best of his skill in a modern locomotive cab, cigarette in hand, quarter vent window cracked to exhaust the tobacco smoke. (Socially accepted, back in 'the day'). To score a big diesel loco in the day would probably mean he is not too young to have gained enough seniority to be "big wheel". Or maybe he is a fireman of seniority, 'having a steer' on a premier train such as the 'Spirit'.

I don't know if it was a courtesy or perhaps the VR didn't want their new locomotives trashed, that they were ash tray equipped. Quarter vent windows began flipping open whilst trailing unit, leaking water, causing rust, and breakage. Instructions were issued to simply seal them up with putty, screws and later silicone; I can only guess they presumed the driver would smoke only on meal breaks or when stationary. This left the driver no other choice whilst on the run but to crack open the side wind up window to vent out a smokey cab. Right next to his ear... The roar of the Diesel engine from the outside is deafening on these things.

The VR never again bought locomotives with any kind of fresh air ventilation other than naturally having opening side windows.

Look also outside, do you see a rear vision mirror? No? It was rule book practice to again open the window on the run, stick your head outside, exceeding the maximum allowable outline of the vehicle and look back to check your train. This practice ended only after a near fatal injury was sustained by a driver in the course of his duties in the 1990's.

Automatic brake valves and Vigilance equipment that exhausted directly into the cab with an almighty hiss. Fumey, draughty cabs. Inadequate or

faulty cab heaters for the long, cold, non-fatigue managed shifts.

VR drivers got fed up when change was called for, and no solution to their issues was sought. Or times when there was no consultation on changes and modifications to their work environment.

Through the cab committee, at least a driver representative would have a fair and 'unbiased' say on any change or upgrade to their working conditions. Changes are all part of any job but is it fair when those changes are dictated by people unaffected by that working environment?

Side mirrors were never installed across the fleet until the 1980's. Locomotives in other states had them as built in the 1950's. Installed radio equipment to communicate with the train controller and later, the guard and other trains, was not rolled out fleet wide until after a locomotive crew died in a rear end collision in 1982.

Look now at those drivers of the past and think of the well known "drivers ear". Hearing damage affecting many Victorian Loco drivers, many, on their left hand side. If it seems to you, that this observation is a long bow to draw, you must have been born for a dictators role. Any way you look at it, this is what I see when I look at this picture in wonder.

*Below Photo: screen shot from a short film. Footage by the National film and sound archive of Australia.*



# Where Is It?

with Trevor Penn and Des Jowett

edited by Warren Banfield



Over 30 years after the photo was taken, this location is as busy as ever but you won't see a train like this here again.  
So "Where Is It?"

**THE previous *Where Is It?* [below right] was at Footscray, looking in the Down direction from the Up end. The photograph is from the Public Record Office. The correct guess winners were Michael Werzbinski (MTM) and Lou Perna (V/Line).**

**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!**

## FOOTSCRAY

by Trevor Penn

“FOOTI-SCRAY.” Well, that’s how Franco Cozzo always pronounced it in the television commercials promoting his nearby furniture emporium.

Looking west towards the station [right], the narrow Hopkins Street overbridge is prominent in this official photo, most likely taken in the early to mid 1950s. The “Style R” light signal on the left with its painted directional arrows is the Down Arrival Home protecting a crossover and the divergence of the lines to Newport, Sunshine and beyond. Lower down the post, and next to the Low Speed “C light” is an Illuminated Letter A, as the signal box could switch out with the route set for the Newport line, and no doubt there were moves at all hours of the night to and from Spotswood Power House, Newport Yard and Williamstown.

On the ground we have a pair of target Dwarf signals controlling setback moves from the Up main line and the exit from Angliss’s Siding, of which more anon. The numbering of the signals as 2, U2 and V2 indicates they were all worked from a single miniature lever in the 20 lever power frame that was installed in the existing Footscray A Box in 1930, superseding a 36 lever mechanical one.

The railway history in this area is quite complex as Footscray once boasted two separate stations, one on each line, and for a time there were no fewer than four signal boxes in the immediate area.

THE grand celebrations that marked the opening of the Williamstown and Sunbury lines on 13<sup>th</sup> January 1859, and the start of public traffic four days later, were followed by the opening of a station at Footscray 11 days later on 24<sup>th</sup> January. Referred to as Footscray “Suburban” it was a twin storey masonry structure located around the corner, just on the Up side of Napier Street, but this could only serve passengers travelling on the Williamstown and Geelong lines.

On 1<sup>st</sup> March 1859 a second pair of platforms came into use, said to be mainly for ticket checking, being squeezed in between the Nicholson Street and Albert Street level crossing gates. In 1874 a “proper” station was erected at this spot, known at various times as Footscray “Main Line”, and Footscray North, then from 1889 onwards as Middle Footscray. This curious twin station set-up persisted for over 40 years.

Signalling as we understand it came to Footscray in July 1879, with “the provision of Interlocking Apparatus” in a wooden structure boasting 17 levers, and perched high up on the cutting side with a commanding view overlooking the road bridge. Known as Footscray Junction or Footscray A Box, this small square building on stilts served its purpose until the solid brick box on the centre platform came into use on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1901, some 13 months after the opening of the new triangular shaped station. It continued to function until 21<sup>st</sup> November 1976, closing when the track quadruplication from South Kensington



came into use, instantly doubling the line capacity while eliminating delays from conflicting moves at the junction.

Basically in Footscray’s mechanical signalling heyday, A Box had control of the actual junction, B Box swung a set of interlocked gates at Napier Street, C Box did likewise on the Main Line at Albert Street, while D Box, a late comer dating from 1921, and situated between A and C Boxes (!) controlled the gates and the new electric tramway square at Nicholson Street. All except for D Box operated one or more sets of points at some stage. C and D Boxes disappeared in 1926 and 1927 respectively, both being rendered surplus by the grade separation that took place in conjunction with the building of the new Goods Lines. B Box managed to hang in there until 1957, when the Napier Street underpass was opened.

We did say it was complex, but for those of you still reading at this point, the story continues ...

In the beginning, Safeworking at this important location was decidedly primitive but this was typical of railways everywhere in that era.

The Driver of an engine or train to or from the Main Line would sound one prolonged whistle at 400 yards distance from the Junction Signal, and was required to shut off steam and reduce speed so that his train could be stopped “with ease” at least 100 yards distant from the points. A move along the Williamstown-Geelong line required a Driver to challenge the signal by sounding two distinct whistles.

The Signaller, or as the Rule Book called him, the Switchman, having visually ascertained there was nothing else about that could foul the move, could then lower his semaphore by 45 degrees to show Caution, with a green light displayed by night, before bracing himself and taking a firm hold of the weighted point lever which had to be held or steadied for all facing moves. The Driver could now put on steam, taking care not to exceed 8 miles per hour, or 13 km/h, through the turnout.

These days on the fast Regional Rail Link the diverging speed limit though the dual gauge points on the North Melbourne flyover is 15 km/h, illustrating just how far we have progressed in 160 years.

FINALLY we come to Angliss's Siding. In 1903 William Angliss, a large scale butcher and pastoralist, made application to the Railway Department for a private siding to serve his proposed Imperial Freezing Works. This came to occupy a large site overlooking the Saltwater (later Maribyrnong) River fronting Ballarat Road, and bounded on the south and east sides by the present Newell and Jamieson Streets. The Victorian Railways estimated the cost of the siding would set him back £3,500 but Angliss used his personal influence with old Tommy Bent, the Minister for Railways, to obtain a government grant which reduced this amount by £2,000. Corruption in high places is nothing new. In addition to his lucrative meat business, Angliss went on to a 40 year career in conservative politics as an MLC and was awarded a knighthood in 1939.

Excavation works in the Footscray cutting encountered very hard rock, and the cost blew out to £5,254 plus another £360 for sidings in the works area itself. If this rock caused problems for the early 20<sup>th</sup> century engineers, one wonders how the

original contractors, using only hand drills and blasting powder, had coped with it more than 45 years previous. The new siding came into use on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1905.

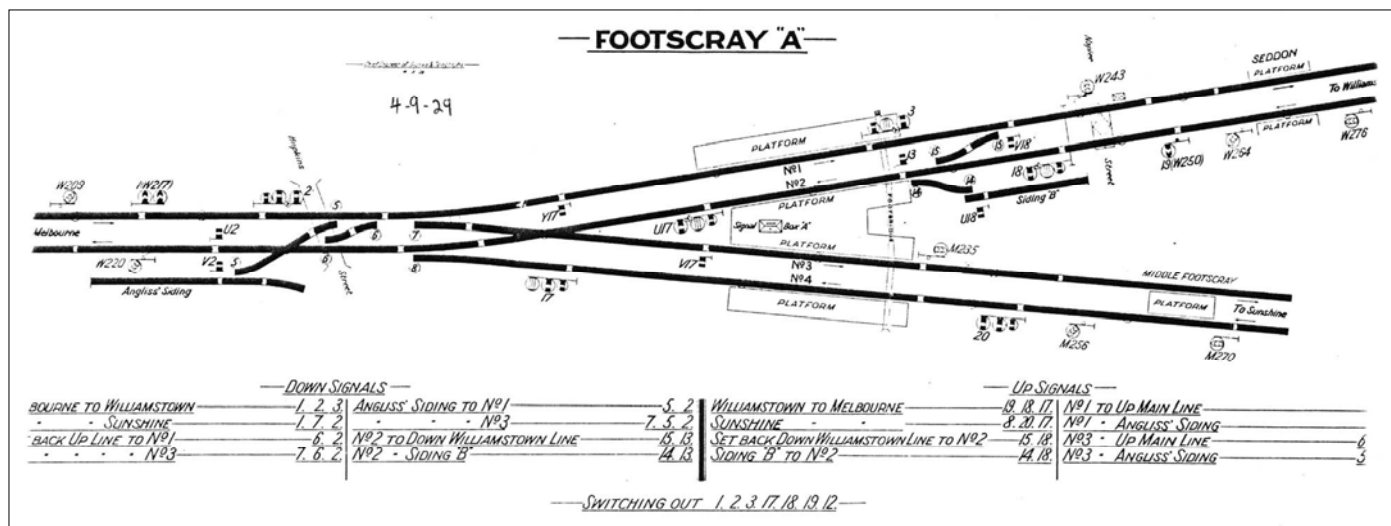
Animals sent by rail to Newmarket and purchased at the nearby saleyards were walked along public roads to Newell's Paddock, there to await the last rites. As motor vehicles began to proliferate, these droving operations in the vicinity of Lynch's Bridge must have caused traffic problems. As a means of solving these a wrought iron pedestrian bridge, that had spanned the Yarra at the bottom end of Punt Road since 1899, was relocated close to the end of Hobson's Road, Kensington, in 1941 and as the Stockbridge it caters for Lycra clad Yuppies on bicycles to the present day.

Special instructions for shunting the siding, and published in the General Appendix, stress that the line dropped away on a grade of 1 in 40 to a dead-end buffer stop perilously situated at the end of an embankment some 30 feet (10 m) above the river flats. This was located on swamp land owned by the Melbourne & Metropolitan Board of Works, and the VR was obliged to pay the MMBW the sum of £5 per annum in rent as a consequence!

Ten "medium trucks" would fit between the buffers and a set of trailing points that led to three sidings in the works area proper, and these most likely handled inwards fuel for the boiler



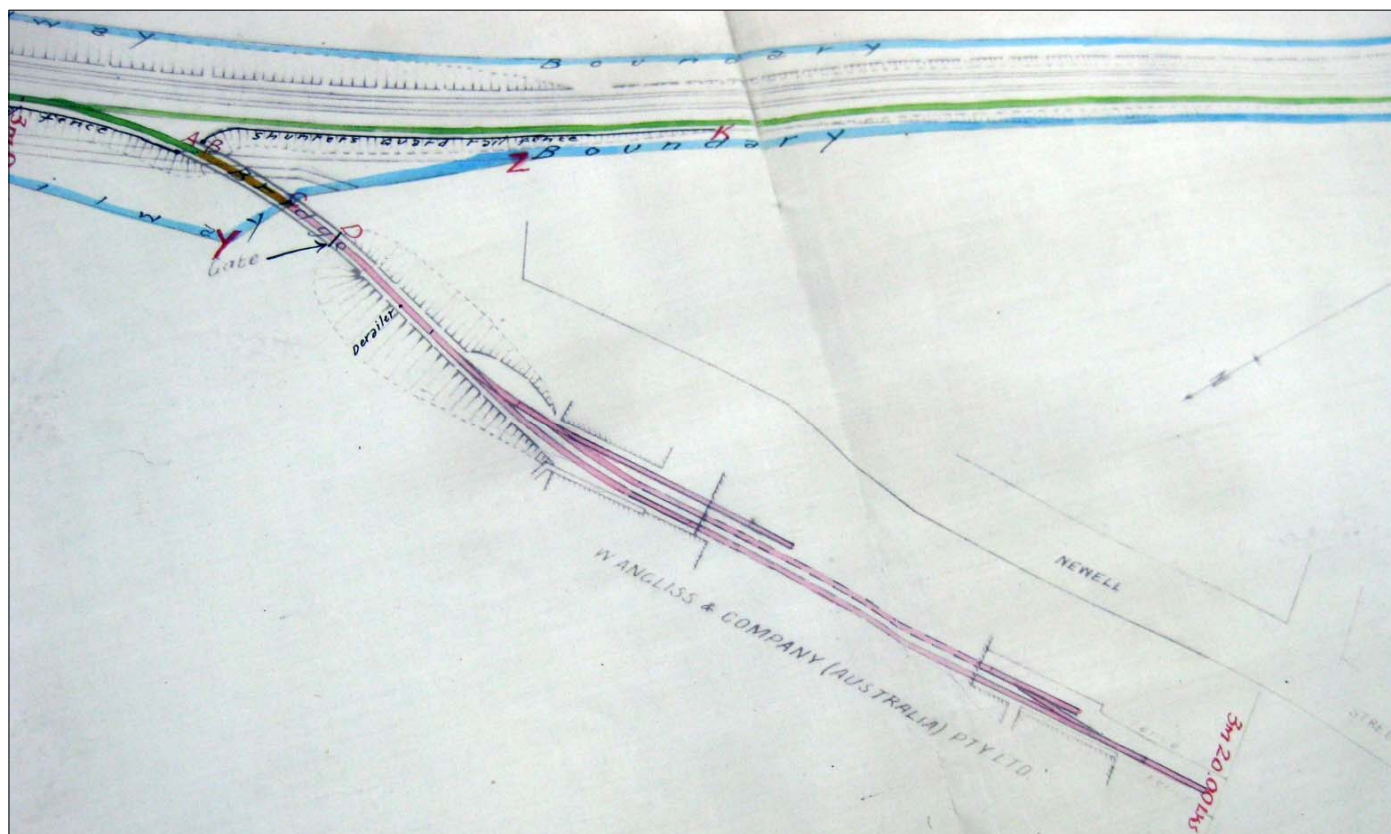
Footscray looking in the Up direction, also in the early to mid 1950s, some 20 years before the provision of two extra tracks from South Kensington in 1976. On the left is Home signal Post 17 from the up Sunshine line to Melbourne, for a Medium Speed aspect (note the rear of a Golden Fleece service station behind). Then setback Dwarf V17 from the down Sunshine line; Home signal U17 from the up Newport line, for a Normal Speed aspect; and setback Dwarf Y17 from the down Newport line. The chimney seen above the Hopkins Street bridge is most likely at the Angliss Meatworks. COURTESY PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE (VICTORIA) NEG. S-441



Track and signal diagram for Footscray A Box with commissioning of the new power frame in 1930.

COURTESY VICTORIANRAILWAYS.NET

Looking south-east, the track arrangements at Angliss Meatworks. Footscray station is out of view at the top right. COURTESY DES JOWETT



house, and iced T vans of chilled or frozen meat outbound for export via Port Melbourne or Williamstown. Dwarf V2 was abolished and the mainline points were spiked out of use on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1970 and lifted soon after, while the meatworks itself lingered on until 1977.

EARLY in his railway career, Yard Porter Ted Aston had the misfortune to lose a leg in a shunting accident at Nyora, and so he became a Signaller. As a Block Recorder at the West Tower in 1970-71 I had the occasional pleasure of working with Old Ted, who was a captivating storyteller. One of his many recollections concerned his time in Footscray Box, circa early 1960s.

One night there was a sudden disruption to traffic on the Up side of Spotswood, and as bad luck would have it a briquette

train bound for the Power House line was bearing down on Footscray from the direction of South Kensington. Crikey, what to do? If he held the long train at one of his Home signals, it would block everything on the Sunshine line, thereby causing a total snafu.

Then a sudden inspiration – why not stow the wretched thing out of the way in Angliss's Siding?

Problem solved! The Loco Crew and Guard of the "Coalie" were duly advised, the motor points were reversed and the Dwarf signal cleared for the awkward setback move, with Signaller Ted watching anxiously as the train disappeared backwards beneath Hopkins Street. As the pantograph of the L class electric loco attempted to pass under the bridge girders, there was a massive blue flash, followed by total darkness, and an awful silence. Angliss's Siding wasn't wired ...

# TALKBACK, ONE FINAL CHAT....

By: Michael Hinch

## Hearing Loss is horrible.

Comrades,

July 5<sup>th</sup> 2019. The day I retired from the rail industry at V/Line. To have contemporary relevance in this journal, you have to be there, but I have one last bone to pick. Retirement is Bittersweet. Finally not having to put up with Management's crap and then again, a farewell to everything that has defined my working life. That final day, I was fortunate that John Marotta was at his desk in the Union office, when I went in to say my farewells he asked me if I had filled out my Workcover forms. I had completely forgotten. I will remain grateful for his reminder. Of course the reference here was to my hearing loss. Submitting this form was timely, as the last day of employment with V/Line involves a so called – Exit Medical – which consists entirely of a hearing test. Nothing else.

Filling out the Workcover form:

- Nature of injury: Hearing loss.
- Date of injury: I had to think about this.... So I wrote "05/07/1976 to 05/07/2019." 43 years to the day.

That's a long time to endure an injury but it is as accurate as I could be and is typical of the industry wide experience with this problem. I imagine that the person whom had to process this at the Insurance Company may have had to ponder it for a while but hey, that's why they get paid the big bucks.

Hearing loss can come from very few causes. In my case (and typically for those right throughout our industry since railway time began) it was caused by long term exposure to excessive noise over the course of a career. Ear muffs have been available to us on issue for many years. However, historically speaking, they were not always practical to use and the actual quality of these devices was questionable. Read- cheap plastic crap, offering little or no protection whatsoever. Moving beyond the 1980's and 90's, this equipment improved in quality, but only enough to actually offer some basic protection to the ear drums. The Victorian Railways (as it was known), V/Line, Freight and the Electric running business groups, really only ever paid lip service to the problem and the result is a large collective group of sufferers. Indeed

today, V/Line actually prohibit the use of any kind of ear phone style devices. This prohibition means that proven devices such as noise cancelling headphones are not permitted.

If smokers are social lepers, then hearing loss sufferers are social misfits. In a noisy, crowded room, hearing loss manifests in its cruellest fashion. "Stop shouting" is a familiar phrase to the sufferer. The thing is, people mistake hearing loss for aggression. If you can't hear yourself actually speak, then using a loud voice is involuntary. You don't realize that you are doing it and when you are called out for it publically, it is embarrassing, humiliating and emotionally painful. When the sufferer has to repeatedly ask someone to please repeat what they have said, or ask the person speaking to them to please face you and not direct their speech in another direction, it can be awkward.

Hearing loss also causes physical pain. I imagine that everyone reading this would have, at some stage, owned a stereo speaker which was faulty and had a tendency to emit a crackling noise. That very same type of crackling noise somehow attacks the ear drums of a hearing loss sufferer and let me tell you, IT HURTS.

Another symptom is Tinnitus. In its most virulent form, it never goes away. It is there always. It is a high pitched screaming. There is no cure. Sleeping is often difficult and sadly, people have been known to end their own lives because they could no longer stand the ever constant high pitch squeal. These symptoms are all a consequence of exposure to excessive noise on a long term basis. I can speak from experience. The older ones in the readership will be just too familiar with being confronted with the task of running overloaded goods/freight trains up long grades for long periods of time because the old B or T class was struggling with a load. They will be familiar with the need to communicate with your mate on the loco and the only way that you can be heard is by shouting at the top of your voice. This type of communicating becomes somehow burned into your very manner. It can define how people regard you as a person.

### The exit medical.

Listen carefully boys and girls because this one is all important. As I mentioned, the exit medical is a medical in name only. All it actually consists of is a hearing test because that is all that V/Line management asks of the service provider. (What the other companies do, I cannot say) You are entitled to a copy of the results. Take them and file them. That is important. These results can assist in terms of evidence at a later time for compensation. Compensation comes in two forms, a monetary payout and secondly the provision of hearing aids and associated medical costs into perpetuity.

### The Process and Criteria

The threshold for monetary compensation for hearing loss is determined by an aggregate loss of hearing in both ears and averaged out at or above 10%. This is known as the binaural loss. If the binaural loss is only 9.99% then sorry. Close, but no cigar. If the binaural loss is exactly at or over 10%, then some money is coming your way. It is that definite and *cut and dried*. In my case, the testing which was carried out by the V/Line medical examination group of choice, determined that my personal binaural loss was measured at way over the base compensation worthy threshold. At the time that I received that Audiometer diagnosis, I was ignorant of the fact that my measured impairment was over the threshold for compensation. I didn't know about the 10% bottom line. So I stepped forward into retirement, wondering what, if anything regarding my hearing loss plight, would happen next.

I didn't need to wait long. My WorkCover application form was assessed by the V/Line insurance company of choice, CGU. I received a number of communications from this company and the general line of phone calls and letters basically informed me that I would be required to attend a medical hearing specialist of their choice to determine if my impairment was indeed claim worthy.

I most certainly did attend the medical assessment appointments arranged by CGU at which I filled out a survey of my history

(remember this small point for a reference a little further on). The survey asked me questions such whether I had ever used a lawn mower and when. Had I ever used a gun? Had I ever ridden a motorcycle? When did I first notice the symptoms? Give dates and details. I can only relate the sentiment that it is just a little bit difficult to remember if I had any ringing in my ears on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July 1978 or if I heard a loud noise on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 1986. Give me a break. This chap then stuck a tuning fork on my head and asked me how I felt about that (I gotta tell you, when a stranger sticks a tuning fork on my head and asks me how it makes me feel I can only react with confusion. I don't know about you but I reckon that this regime of testing constitutes an unusual approach. But then again, I'm just a Train Driver and what would I know). He then asked a bunch of the usual questions. "Do you use hearing protection, what are your symptoms etc." He then sent me out of his door to do a hearing test with a shop front company in Collingwood (No one told me that was gunna happen), "Just get on the tram up Victoria Street" he told me, "You'll be right." When I found the place, I underwent yet another test in the hearing cabinet.

A further waiting period ensued and about a month later I received two letters in the mail. The first one had a letter which stated that CGU accepted my claim for hearing aids and the ongoing medical and like expenses. Happy days. "I'm gunna get me some hearing aids!" This letter instructed me to attend an Audiologist and undergo an assessment to determine which type of devices would best suit me. I did arrange this and the Audiologist submitted his opinion to CGU. The second letter however, was not such a *happy chocolate* message. It informed me that the Audiologist that CGU sent me to had somehow determined that my binaural impairment was about 3 light years under the threshold for monetary compensation, and therefore there would not be a cent coming my way. I believe that the term used by most young people to describe my reaction to this news was WTF? How on earth could that be?

The testing was extensive at both the V/Line RMO and the CGU hearing cabinet session. CGU then muddied the water a little and put the frighteners up me with a phone call. Why it was necessary is beyond me. I was informed on this call that my claim for the specific type of hearing aids (as determined by my Audiologist) had been received and would now have to go through a process of review. Once again. WTF? I asked what this process of review entailed and was told that it would have to go to a business manager to decide if the type of hearing aids that were

prescribed for me by an expert and that I would need would actually be suitable for my personal needs. That's right kiddies, a friggin business manager was to make a determination about my personal medical needs, even though I had been assessed by a medical professional. At no stage after the acceptance of liability by CGU was it enunciated that the acceptance of liability will be subject to a review. For all intent and purpose, it presented as unconditional. All that this information achieved was to give me a great deal of anxiety. I really need these things and this mob are now telling me that only bureaucracy can determine what is good for me and not a medical specialist.

A short time later, I received another communication in the mail. This one instructed me to fill out a survey. At this point, let me remind you of the first survey (In the specialist's office). Have I ever used a lawn mower and when? Have I ever used a gun? Have I ever ridden a motorcycle? I phoned up the bloke who sent me the survey and explained that I had already filled out this same survey with the hearing specialist that his company had initially sent me to. He denied that CGU was in receipt of any information from such a survey undertaken by the expert that they sent me to. I can only describe the conversation that then ensued between as being robust in nature but to no avail. This fellow made it very clear that if I did not fill out the survey then CGU would not be liable for the provision of my hearing aids. My concerns lay with the possibility that I would fill out the survey with one syllable difference to the first one I filled out and surprise, the first one would suddenly surface and then my claim would be in forfeit. Some would describe this as a touch of paranoia. I would describe it as hard learned experience in dealing with bureaucracy. I can but assume that all of these tactics are designed to wear you down. I can honestly say that the entire exercise pretty nearly wore me down to the point where I was about to tell them where to stick their hearing aids, but a little voice kept telling me to persist.

The outcome? Ultimately, they eventually caved in and accepted their liability. The brow beating tactics did not prevail and I am going to receive the hearing aids that my Audiologist recommended. For this part of the Workcover claim process, the lesson is – they will make it hard, you must persist and ultimately you should prevail.

#### Show me the money

Back to the second part of my pursuit for a fair and reasonable compensation outcome and response to my impairment issue, the

financial compensation for physical loss, as it is determined by the laws of this state. I may have retired from V/Line, but I did not resign from the Union. Being a member of this organization is too important to me. So I turned to the brothers and asked for an opinion. Jim was good enough to refer me to Maurice and Blackburn for legal guidance in the matter. I am grateful for that. This legal company operates on a *no win – no pay* (for their costs and expenses) basis for all such compensation claims. They clearly felt that my case was reasonable and agreed to represent me.

Harking back to more of the process part of this account of my experience, with every determination of the Insurance company, (be it in your favour or not) you are given a "tick the box" questionnaire, which prompts you to nominate whether you accept or dispute the determination and the outcome. If you do dispute the outcome, then a course of arbitration is entered into. On the issue of determining the right or wrong of any claim, the matter is taken out of the hands of all parties and handed to an authority known as the "Medical Panel." The findings of the Medical Panel are final and binding and I certainly understand and accept that. It is a guaranteed independent body, untouchable by anyone or anything. The determinations of the Medical Panel are completely unbiased and independent and all parties are bound by the decisions of the Medical Panel. It is the final say on the matter and I feel that is fair and reasonable. If the matter is beyond dispute, as determined by an independent, unbiased entity and everyone has to accept the outcome, whether you are an individual or a powerful Insurance company, then I reckon that is about as good as you can do. At the time of writing this, I have not yet had my assessment by the Medical Panel, but I look forward to a fair and reasonable hearing on a level playing field. I am hoping that I achieve a positive outcome, not only for myself, but for those who might also decide to contest a decision which they might regard as unjust. I can but hope.

*For the final time as a scribe to this publication on an opinion piece, allow me to express the hope that all of you have a safe and joyous festive season.*

*Take care Comrades.*

*Michael A. Hinch*



## PROTECTING PROTECTED ACTIONS

Taking protected industrial action is a key weapon for unions and their members to try to persuade employers to agree to fair and decent wages and conditions. Several specific legal requirements must be met for industrial action to be protected, including:

- a ballot is held in which the majority of eligible employees authorise industrial action;
- the existing enterprise agreement has passed its nominal expiry date;
- parties have genuinely tried to reach an agreement;
- the action taken is not about unlawful terms;
- there is no 'pattern bargaining';
- the action is authorised by a protected action ballot in which the majority of eligible employees authorise industrial action;
- the action is notified in accordance with the relevant notice requirements; and
- the action taken is in support of claims about 'permitted matters'.

When industrial action is protected, employees are usually protected from certain legal liability, such as being sued or being fined. However, a decision of the High Court of Australia has made it even more difficult for employees to take protected industrial action.

### **The Esso decision: another obstacle to taking protected industrial action**

After years of litigation between Esso and the AWU, the High Court in 2017 made a landmark decision that means:

1. if the Fair Work Commission or a Court makes orders relating to industrial action that apply to a union; and
2. the union breaches the orders

then any subsequent industrial action organised for the same enterprise agreement will not be protected industrial action and will be unlawful.

Now because of this decision, if a union breaches an order relating to industrial action, even a small breach such as missing a court lodgement due date for a document; the union won't be able to organise or engage in protected industrial action.

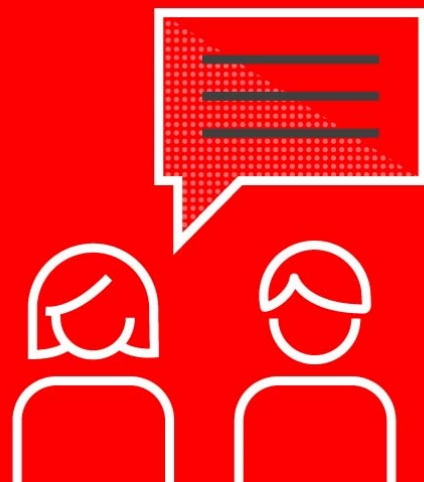
## Since the Esso decision

Employers have been trying to use the *Esso* decision to stop protected industrial action. Recently when the RTBU moved to keep the passenger barriers open at train stations Metro went to court to pursue a technical argument that it wasn't industrial action. Metro got an injunction to stop the open barrier action. Metro Trains then tried to stifle the union's ability to take industrial action by alleging that the RTBU had not fully complied with other parts of the court order. The RTBU is continuing to fight this.

These cases make clear that it's more important than ever that we remain alert to the tactics being used by employers to attack the right of unions and workers to organise and engage in protected industrial action.

If you have suffered loss, or are facing  
an unfair situation, you and your family  
shouldn't have to suffer.

**WE CAN HELP.**



# 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](mailto:reception@rtbuvicloco.com.au)

## Nelson's Column.

By Ernie Nelson V/Line Passenger Spencer Street.

This column contains poisonous libels and vitriolic slanders, colourful language, nudity, violence, and smut of a general nature and anything else that helps sell Magazines, if you don't like it hit the road Mate! Email me at [booze.up@myplace.com.au](mailto: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.

### Premier Daniel Andrews Wins \$46,000 Pay Rise.

That's right, taking his wages to \$441,000.00 a year or \$8,480.76 a week, that's 11.8%, which is 9.8% above what the Government is offering to us. They're not bad our polities, are they?

Further down the parliamentary food chain, backbench MPs will get a pay rise of 3.5 per cent after a convenient decision by the "independent" Remuneration Tribunal, taking their annual wage to \$182,413.00 or \$3,507.94 a week, which still more than what's on offer to us.

For a lousy 2% per annum, our CEO, (who earns substantially more than the Premier, according to VLP annual report for 2018), wants to remove over 120 clauses of our Enterprise Agreement that apply to V/Line Train Drivers and turn Shunters and Conductors against us by giving them some of our work to do, but you'll get 2%.

Basically, the CEO wants to gut training and remove conditions of employment this in turn may garner a performance bonus from the Board of Directors. Time will tell.



### Investigations.

Why is it, that an investigation will drag on forever with generally no clear result? With people stood down for months on end to stew and ponder in fear.

How is it that an accusation can be made, which subsequently turns out to be false or misleading and there are no consequences for the accusers?

This seems to be the pattern.

The system also seems to preference white collar over blue collar workers, this has not gone un-noticed by the

troops. The only time it is used against white collar is when someone is looking to remove a threat to their own career path.

**Unions lift wages for non-union members by creating a higher prevailing wage. Even if you aren't a union member, your pay is influenced by the strength or weakness of organised labour. The presence of unions sets off a wage race to the top. Their absence sets off a race to the bottom.**

Eric Liu  
American author, lecturer, policy advisor



### Back in the 70s.

Way back in 1975, when I was a Junior Station Assistant at Clyde in good old New South Wales, my boss at the time, Stan Thompson, told me that only Train Controllers and Train Drivers will have a clear future in this industry. Stan was one of the clearest thinkers I have ever met, he told me to get my Safeworking briefs and either become a Signaller or Train Driver. He taught me Safeworking and was very hands on, especially if I didn't answer a question thoroughly enough to his liking.

### Speaking of Starting.

When I started at Clyde as a JSA in December 1974 I reported to a bloke named Ray Larven who was in charge of us kids, he took me over to meet the boss warning me that his bark was worse than his bite, which was worrisome to me.

We go into the office and there's this bloke wearing a white shirt and gold braid epaulettes looking at some paperwork on his desk.

He looked up and said, "What's up, Ray?" Ray indicated he had brought the new Junior to meet him. He said, "Did I ask for this meeting?" Ray replied, "No." and Stan said, "I tell ya what Ray, you keep the little c\*\*t alive for three months, and if it survives I'll put it through Safeworking, now feck off the pair of yous I'm busy." As we turned and left, I noticed his paperwork was a Form Guide for the weekend, I thought, "Christ what've I let myself in for!" you could feel the love.

That's how it was in those days, you copped it sweet and you never squealed.

### Classes at Central.

When I started the Station Assistants class at Central, a Senior Traffic Inspector gave us a lecture on what was expected of us, the more he banged on the more animated he became, and I thought he was gunna have a stroke.

After he departed our instructor, Dave, held up the Book of Rules and Regulations and asked us what its purpose

was, there was the usual gunzelly answers from the Train Cranks corner, I just said it was self-explanatory, he said close but no cigar.

He explained that the books purpose was to get our stories straight after a massive feck up, so we all sang the same tune and looked out for each other. Nobody liked dobbers and railway yards were dangerous places for snitches.

He also made sure we joined the Union first up.

By the way the preamble to the rule book I was issued as I recall went thus;

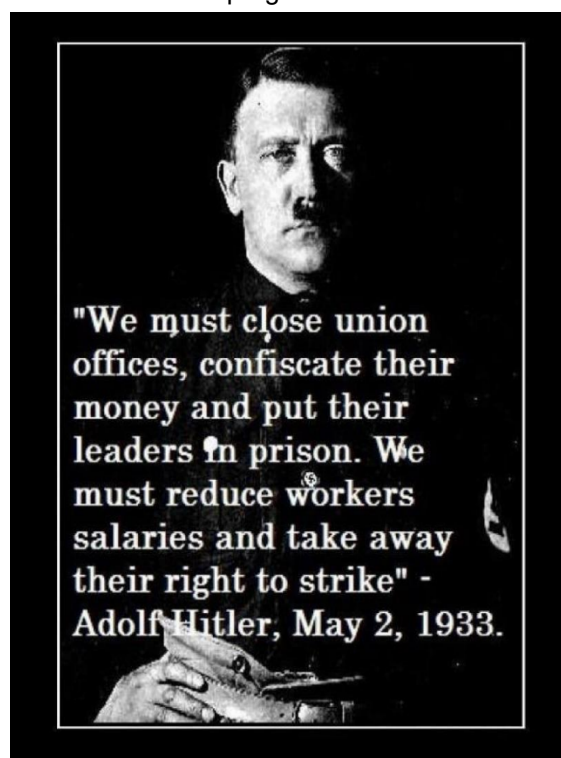
**This Book of Rules and Regulations is issued for the guidance of the Officers and Men in the service of the New South Wales Government Railways.**

**This book remains the property of the N.S.W.G.R.**

### **Commencing the Slow Death of the Railways.**

The N.S.W.G.R. from October 20<sup>th</sup>, 1972 had been swallowed up into the Public Transport Commission of New South Wales along with the Government Busses and the Sydney Ferries in June 1973, from the Sydney Harbour Transport Board and the bankrupted Port Jackson and Manly Steamship Company nationalisation. A bloke from Pomgolia named Phillip Shirley was the first Chief Commissioner and he was a bit dodgy to say the least so that the P.T.C. was nicknamed Phil's Travelling Circus.

The rumour mill said he had shares in British Paints and started the Blue and White Livery debacle which cost the state millions for very little gain as one third of the fleet was Tucson Red and another third Blue and White and all the new Comeng stuff was stainless steel. The place was a mess. Management could not run their fingers up their dates and track its progress.



*Scomos plans for Unions.*

### **When I first applied for the job.**

I had left school at 16 mainly because I was getting into a lot of mischief and my teachers were probably relieved to see the back of me, the old man said I had to find a job by the time school went back or I was going back to school.

I was standing outside the lottery office on Broadway across the road from Central Station and I got to talking to a bloke dressed in office type clothes, I told him I was looking for a job and he said he ran the Railways recruiting desk and asked me if I wanted a job? I didn't know much about trains or railways at the time let alone think it would become my lifetime career, so I thought why not, and the rest is history.

He arranged a start date which was Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> December 1974. I reported to a cranky old clerk at Broadway and asked, "Do I Have to do and aptitude test, Mister?" he responded, "You found the fecking place didn't ya, son?" after that pleasant exchange I went and got felt up by the Railway Medical Officers which was just plain weird. There was one old Sheila with a fag hanging out of her mouth who seemed to spend a long time examining naked boys and believe you me she left no stone unturned or hole unexamined. The finger up the bum was totally unpleasant and unexpected nor was it forewarned. Don't know what she was looking for and she never mentioned what it was either, my mate said at least my doctor was female and I pointed out without seeing her birth certificate I couldn't be too sure of that.

Gawd she was a blob of a woman with the bedside manner of Heinrich Himmler and the gentle touch of Atilla the Hun.

### **The Job's Fecked.**

Afterwards I was speaking to one of the old blokes who was in for a medical after an injury, he said to me, "Why are you joining the Railways for? The Jobs fecked mate, it's fecking rooted and going downhill fast, they'll probably pull it all up and make it into roads." And I've been hearing it said now for 45 years, could still yet prove to be right.

### **On Leaving School.**

My teacher once said you won't get paid to stare out of a window all day, he got that wrong!



*It's Every Drivers Mago. Remember it's your Mago too so write in on any relevant subject you like.*

*Seeya later, Drive!*

# FROM THE ELECTRIC CHAIR

By A Spark Driver

Have

your

Say!

*In my time as a driver reading LocoLines has been very entertaining and another source of information from our Union and members alike. So it would be great if members like myself more regularly used this column. Here is my say, devoted to the Electric Running Depot, also known as The Sparks.*

More senior drivers will remember the E class electric locos. Based around a Tait suburban train, these ancient machines whirled around the suburban system hauling trains of firewood, briquettes, and general freight. When the railways ran a lot of goods trains, and when people used solid fuel for heating, cooking and hot water. These locos were renowned for their dodgy electrical wiring, a legacy of years of neglect, and it was not uncommon for crews to receive various electric shocks. They were referred to as "electric chairs" for years before their retirement.

Workplace safety concerns were surprisingly not the reason that these locos were finally retired in the 1980's; it was simply a change in the business, as people converted their homes to natural gas and the need to operate trainloads of solid fuel disappeared.

For traditionalists, it is pleasing to note that workplace safety concerns remain a low priority with the successors of the Victorian Railways, being of course our dear friends at Metro. I suppose the main difference between the old Victorian Railways and Metro would be that the VR considered a workplace injury as awfully sad, and worked hard to rehabilitate the unfortunate sufferer, while Metro seems to think it all awfully inconvenient, and possibly grounds for disciplining someone.

This is one peculiar company, populated by people whose knowledge about railways, and indeed about people, is remarkable. For its complete absence. The astonishing thing is that this company is so paranoid about even their own managers. Any sign that those poor sods might be developing some knowledge about railways is enough to jeopardise their careers. Heaven forbid that they might actually agree with something their drivers say; no matter how logical our remarks may be, for a manager agreeing with us is nearly

always a career-ending event.

You then have to feel sorry for Marc, Jim, Paris and our other elected leaders and representatives. These guys are constantly witnessing and then having to deal with absolutely silly actions by our Dear Leaders at Metro. And reminding them of their obligations with regard to previous agreements, law, even common decency. Then again, just remembering the names of these "fly-in, fly-out" managers must be an achievement.

It is one thing for Metro to reject our submissions when it is things like pay rises, that is ultimately just part of the standard industrial relations workings. It is another thing altogether when they reject advice from our Union on principle, when that advice is motivated by trying to make the place run better and safer.

There are many things that contribute to that last assertion. Here's a few examples:

The recent modifications to ComEng trains, where the incandescent marker lights have been upgraded to LED type. This could have been a simple thing, simply change the globes to provide stronger lighting while retaining the same controls (a couple of toggle switches), and even the same fittings and mounts. But no, they have to be smarter than us, so they have made the lights semi-automatic, so that they turn white while the reverser is in forward direction, and red otherwise. That sounds great, until a train stops at a signal, and the driver complies with good practise and centres the reverser; the poor driver heading past in the other direction suddenly sees the marker lights flash from white to red, and wonders whether to assume as per the Rules that they must stop due to some emergency. Maybe not such a big thing in itself, but so symptomatic of the ignorance of our "managers", who in many cases don't care to even read, let alone follow, the Book of Rules and Operating Procedures.

So, what about the track? Metro proudly proclaims themselves as providing a world-class railway, but all we see is an abundance of mud holes, kinks, false top, and crippled rails. That may not be so bad if only the trains all rode well, but lately even the Siemens trains are transferring those track shocks to

the passengers (and us). The X'trapolis trains (undoubtedly the worst riding vehicle I have ever encountered) are something else again, a ghastly ride combined with awful ergonomics. You pity the poor passengers, particularly since they solved the problem of over-crowding by removing 20% of seats, forcing over 80 passengers per train to stand while their train leaps violently along. What was once routine maintenance, performed by local gangs while trains were running, has now assumed a different character; now we need to take out an Absolute Occupation, pay for dozens of replacement buses, and engage outside contractors to do a quick fix that falls apart within weeks or even days. And then they proclaim that these are "improvement works", presumably paid for by the State Government. How this can be an efficient deal for the State is beyond me. Then again, much of the Ministry seems to be populated by people lacking in any railway knowledge, but who join with Metro in asserting their own suitability.

Or what about the signals, which these days seem to be stuck behind trees or bridges, or put where we simply have no hope of seeing them. Once upon a time, we drivers had a large input into signals through our representatives. These were experienced drivers, and produced really good results, often without really costing the company anything more. Now Metro uses inexperienced drivers, working under some of the more ignorant managers, to agree with the engineers' ideas about what should happen. The Up end of Pakenham is one such example, where a perfectly good signal was replaced by one hiding up in the clouds. And of course, despite making the signal hard to see, and SPAD resulting is apparently only the fault of the driver.

And have a look at our rosters. It is now becoming common for drivers to run on just one line constantly, despite the well known (in international terms) risks of doing so. Crazy things like Clifton Hill changeovers are common, yet the distances we drive seem to be decreasing. Where a driver could operate over 4 groups in one shift (and even out-station drivers often drove over 3 corridors in one shift), now we are confined to one group. The poor guys on the Burnley and Clifton Hill

groups don't even get a variety in train types; they might see something that is not an X'trapolis perhaps once a year. And goodness knows what driving those uncomfortable rigid beasts will do to us in terms of long-term body injuries.

*On a positive note*, it is great to see so many of the younger drivers joining the Union again. I know it is hard, and Metro do all they can to try to stop us.

I questioned the Union about the lack of presentations to trainees, and then I found out that Metro conveniently take the trainees out just when the Union (after providing their 24hour Entry Notice) try to visit them at South Ken! Classes of new starts are told that hardly anyone is now in the Union, just a few of the old guys which I have found out is untrue. Some of the people running the training centre are doing all they can to make people think the Union is irrelevant, but the trainee drivers are intelligent enough to realise that "there are two sides to a coin", and usually become members within a short time. IF you have a question, ASK the Union. No point listening to gossip!

The old guys who feared that the younger drivers will not have the same loyalty to the Union have happily been proven wrong, these people have made great drivers, and many of them proudly wear their Union clothing. Good on you all!

*Just a note to my comrades, if you have something to say let the LocoLines editor know, and we can expand members content here. Send your contributions to The Editor (details inside cover). It can remain anonymous, and it may be better for some of us to do so, given Metro's hatred of our Union.*

*Dear Spark Driver:*

*That was a most eloquent article that captures the current situation at Metro. I endorse the sentiments and accuracy of your article, you even brought back some nostalgic memories, my first driving job double header E Class paper train to Fairfield. Paper mill I accept your request for anonymity because of the fear of reprisals from Metro.*

*All the best*

*MM*



**ABOVE :**

Heritage crew on the Hurstbridge shuttles:

RTBU Heritage Committee and Crew Pool Coordinator Mick Welch and  
RTBU Heritage Crew Coordinator (Steam) David Richards having a  
cigar break.

Photo taken by Chris Murty

# RETIREMENTS , RESIGNATIONS AND DEPARTURES

Hi Marc

I am notifying you that I will be retiring from Victorian Railways/Vline at the conclusion of my shift on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2019 after 44 years' service. At that same time I will be cancelling my membership from Rail, train and bus union Loco division (AFULE).

I would like to take this opportunity in thanking you and all members for accepting me as a Chairman, Branch Secretary and Divisional Councillor for 20 + years of part of the 44 years I was employee.

The time has arrived for me to open the next chapter of my life. Wishing you all the very best for the future. United we Stand

Graeme Lord

To whom it may concern

I would like to resign from the Union as I am no longer working for Metro Trains.

Yes I have retired. Keep up the good work for the membership.

Russell Moebus

Dear Marc

As of the 2nd of November I am retiring from V/Line as a locomotive driver, therefore I wish to resign from the RTBU LD from this point. I wish to thank all the past and current executives and members for their help over the years.

Thank you  
Dennis Hedley

*BOOTOM RIGHT CORNER :*

Colin Watson from V/Line Pass who retired on 28/2/19 receiving his retirement plaque from the RTBU Locomotive Division.

Dear Marc

As I am retiring on the 2nd of November 2019, I would also like to resign from the RTBU from that date. I would like to thank all office bearers for their tireless work during my 42 years that I have been a member.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank those drivers that have helped me and for their friendship during this time. I will always be grateful.

Chris Janes

Dear Marc

I wish to inform you I am resigning from the RTBU as from 13 July 2019 as I have retired from Pacific National.

I have been in the Union for around 44 years. I would like to thank the Union staff for a great job and their support.

Stephen Wake



To the RIGHT:

Retired V/Line driver Greg Dixon (left in photo) called by the Union office to collect his plaque, with S300 on it, from RTBU LD Southern Cross Sub Divisional Secretary Howard Hand at Spencer Street.

Please accept my resignation as a member of the RTBU as of 23 August 2019.

I have recently taken early retirement from metro trains Melbourne.

I would like to wish all the members best of luck in the future. And to thank all the union officials over the years who have helped us all.

Regards  
Ian Kiddy



To the LEFT:

Retiring V/Line Passenger driver Peter Keen (right in photo) receives his plaque from fellow Southern Cross driver Coupar Hind.

## ***Mr Jim Rae***

*Wed 30/10/19 we lost one of our old retired drivers from Seymour. Mr Rae was aged 86 years, passed away in the Royal Melbourne Private Hospital*

*Photo taken by Michael Leaney – owner of the Star Hotel at Walhalla.*

*Date – May 2010, when 'Puffing Billy' spent a 'weekend at Walhalla'*





January	February	March	April
S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S
1 2 3 4	1	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4
5 6 7 8 9 10 11	2 3 4 5 6 7 8	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	5 6 7 8 9 10 11
12 13 14 15 16 17 18	9 10 11 12 13 14 15	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	12 13 14 15 16 17 18
19 20 21 22 23 24 25	16 17 18 19 20 21 22	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	19 20 21 22 23 24 25
26 27 28 29 30 31	23 24 25 26 27 28 29	29 30 31	26 27 28 29 30
May	June	July	August
S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S
1 2	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4	1
3 4 5 6 7 8 9	7 8 9 10 11 12 13	5 6 7 8 9 10 11	2 3 4 5 6 7 8
10 11 12 13 14 15 16	14 15 16 17 18 19 20	12 13 14 15 16 17 18	9 10 11 12 13 14 15
17 18 19 20 21 22 23	21 22 23 24 25 26 27	19 20 21 22 23 24 25	16 17 18 19 20 21 22
24 25 26 27 28 29 30	28 29 30	26 27 28 29 30 31	23 24 25 26 27 28 29
31			30 31
September	October	November	December
S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S	S M T W T F S
1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	1 2 3 4 5
6 7 8 9 10 11 12	4 5 6 7 8 9 10	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	6 7 8 9 10 11 12
13 14 15 16 17 18 19	11 12 13 14 15 16 17	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	13 14 15 16 17 18 19
20 21 22 23 24 25 26	18 19 20 21 22 23 24	22 23 24 25 26 27 28	20 21 22 23 24 25 26
27 28 29 30	25 26 27 28 29 30 31	29 30	27 28 29 30 31

Direct Debit Days

Public Holidays

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# RAIL, TRAM & BUS UNION VICTORIA

## LOCOMOTIVE DIVISION

### Membership Form

I..... the undersigned hereby apply to become a member for the Australian Rail, Tram & Bus Industry Union, An Organisation of Employees registered under the Australian *Industrial Relations Act* 1988 as amended, and hereby undertake to comply with the rules and by-laws for the time being of the union.

Mr Mrs Ms Miss (Cross out which is not applicable)

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

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

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

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

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

Date Commenced:.....Grade: ☐ Trainee, ☐ 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.