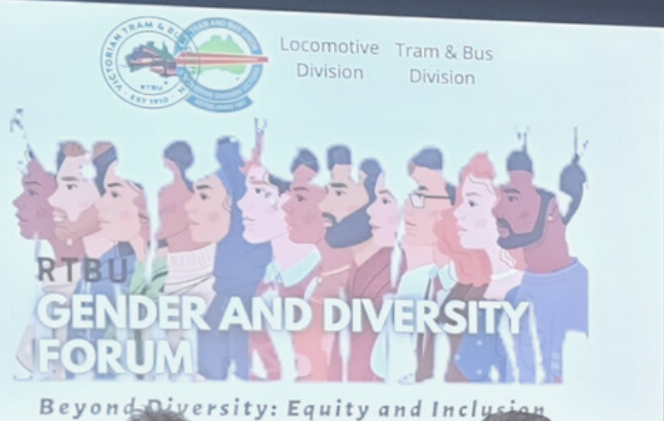




LocoLines

NEWSLETTER FOR LOCOMOTIVE
DIVISION OF THE RTBU VIC

EDITION NO. 77 DEC 2022 / JAN-JULY 2023



THE RTBU *Gender & Diversity Forum*

Our differences that make the difference

ENTERPRISE AGREEMENTS

Nominal Expiry 2023 and
beginning of negotiations.

DE-AMALGAMATION

What does the Future
hold for Locomotive
Division?

LOCOLINES

EDITION 77 2022/JAN-JULY 2023

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Publisher
Paris Jolly

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LOCO LINES DEC 2022/JAN-JULY 2023



SECRETARY'S REPORT

PARIS JOLLY
DIVISIONAL SECRETARY

ENTERPRISE UPDATES

With a lot of events happening throughout the past year, I would like to thank everyone who has continually supported us and helped us make a difference.

METRO

Enterprise Agreement Negotiations

Bargaining has commenced for the Metro Rail Operations EA and we have had a number of meetings with Metro regarding scope of the agreement (Driver agreement v combined Driver/Station staff/Signaller/AOs agreement) and how bargaining should progress. Metro has now confirmed it wishes to continue with a single EA to cover everyone, and on this basis we proceed.

The EA expired on 30 June 2023 and if required, it is only after the expiry date that we are able to take protected action if negotiations are not progressing. However we continue to bargain in good faith to negotiate the best possible agreement.

As you know, we have commenced with meetings around the network to speak to you directly about what you want in the log of claims, what's going on with Metro EA negotiations and answer your questions.

We are also working hard to ensure bargaining proceeds fairly and efficiently for our members and have provided Metro with draft clauses for almost half of our claims.

Metro has not yet provided us with responses to our draft clauses or draft clauses for their log of claims. Metro says it is working on an offer and to do so Metro have cancelled our last 3 bargaining meetings.

Metro have also said it will provide us with its offer. As soon as we have that offer, we will review it and then send it to you with our views.

We have also been keeping Vik and the Rail Division updated on our negotiations with Metro. We met prior to EA bargaining and agreed on a joint strategy for EA bargaining to get the best possible outcome for all members.

In accordance with that strategy we kept them updated on our EA negotiations with Metro through emails and at Branch Executive meetings. This is all documented.

We are highly disappointed by the communication Vik sent to you about us. It is filled with untrue defamatory statements, goes against all the things he said about the importance of unity/working together and breaches the agreed joint strategy. It would be better for members if he concentrated on looking after them in the negotiations rather than slagging off against us.

Despite his actions, we promise you, we will continue to try and work with him and the Rail Division to get the best possible outcome for all members. As always, our focus is on achieving the best results for you.

I would like to thank all of the members that submitted ideas for the EA and the work that your Metropolitan Sub-Division representatives continue to do to assist.

Keep an eye out for Depot meetings that will shortly be taking place to provide in person updates on the progress of bargaining.

Mobile Phone use

Metro has agreed to a working group that is tasked with providing more guidance to Drivers regarding its mobile phone policy and when they can be used. T

he current procedure leaves the decision to the Driver for mobile phone use “when safe to do so”. V/Line take a much safer approach and requires personal and work phones to be switched off whilst in the cab of the train.

Whilst the DTRS is meant to be the primary form of communication this is not the reality with DAOs, Duty managers and managers using the mobile phone as the primary contact whilst on duty.

With Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator (ONRSR) taking a harsher stance against the use of mobile phones by seeking to prosecute a former Victorian driver with reckless endangerment that carries a penalty of up to 3 years imprisonment or a \$300K fine or both, Metro needs to update its policy to ensure it is clear, not open to interpretation and provides a safe system of work.

Getting Involved

The Metropolitan Sub-division are looking for volunteers to assist with numerous projects currently underway. It's a great way to get involved in the Union, dip your toe into the water and help shape your workplace. Contact the Locomotive Division office if you wish to speak to a Metropolitan Sub-divisional representative.

DE-AMALGAMATION

In accordance with the direction of members, we have continued to progress the application at the Fair Work Commission for you to get a ballot to decide whether you want a stand-alone Victorian train driver union or if you want to remain part of the RTBU.

Disappointingly the application is being fought against hard by the Vic Branch and RTBU. We think that's wrong because you, the union members, should be allowed to decide what the best union is for you.

In the De-amalgamation application proceedings, the parties have filed material with the Commission and further timetabling is required going forward. We will keep you updated on any developments

While the application progresses, we have continued with EA bargaining like normal. Despite all the scare mongering, there has been no impact to bargaining because of the application. Each Division has bargained for their members.

We have also continued to try and get your grievances addressed internally but unfortunately have not been able to reach any agreement with the Branch, whether final or in-principle.

In March, at the invitation of Vik, we sent Vik a detailed without prejudice settlement offer which sought sperate agreements and draft rule changes to address your concerns. On 12 April we had a high level discussion with Vik about resolution. He didn't give us details of the Branch's position so we asked for this in writing. On 19 April Vik emailed us stating, “Based on our discussions of 12 April 2023, our ‘high-level in principle’ position is that we will support the separation of agreements subject to reaching agreement on matters which were discussed on 12 April. We will soon provide you with the details of the settlement proposal.” The Branch's detailed proposal didn't include any rule changes. Unsurprisingly, we didn't reach any kind agreement.

We were disappointed Vik sent you communications lying about settlement discussions and a range of other matters. Vik should focus less on bad mouthing us and skewing the truth and more on addressing member grievances.

Locomotive Division members overwhelmingly want to part ways from the RTBU while the Trammies want nothing to do with the Branch and Rail Div members have abandoned the Rail Div in droves asking us to represent them in EA bargaining.

Instead of bad mouthing us Vik needs to do his job and focus on membership issues.

As always, our focus is on members, and doing what's best for members.

SCT/RAILPRO/OPCO

Enterprise Agreement Negotiations

Bargaining has commenced with SCT/Railpro/Opco to replace the EA which is due to expire in September 2023.

The EA is a National agreement and currently covers Drivers in Victoria and South Australia. However the company has confirmed it intends to hire employees to operate out of NSW.

The first meeting was held in Victoria at the Vic Loco offices in Kings way, the second meeting via Zoom and the next meeting will be in Adelaide.

There are a number of work practices that are state based and we will be ensuring that they are defined within the EA and members jobs are secured.

Prohibition Improvement Notices

On the 27 and 28 of April 2023 the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator (ONRSR) issued a prohibition notice and an improvement notice to SCT. Shortly after the notices were issued a number of newly qualified drivers were removed from the footplate as it appeared that specific training paperwork had not been submitted.

Whilst it was disappointing that a clerical error could lead to drivers being pulled off driving trains, SCT committed that the drivers would not be out of pocket for any shifts that had been rostered account of the clerical error.

We are happy to report that all drivers were subsequently paid appropriately.

Southern Shorthaul Rail (SSR)

Enterprise Agreement Negotiations

Bargaining is about to commence with SSR to replace their EA which is due to expire in September 2023. The EA is a multi-state agreement that currently covers Drivers in Victoria and NSW.

The Locomotive Division has put together a log of claims and calls on members to put forward any further ideas they wish to have included in the log of claims.

V/LINE

Enterprise Agreement Negotiations

Being that V/Line is a government operated enterprise, once the Victorian government had confirmed that V/Line had authorisation to start bargaining, the first EA meeting with V/Line was held on Wednesday 21 June and we anticipate meeting with V/Line management on a weekly basis to ensure bargaining progresses efficiently.

The Locotmoive Division bargaining team have been busy reviewing member suggestions, going through a lists of clauses already in the EA that needed to be updated and also making additions to ensure that members continue to get clear and defined clauses, consistency in EA's and a strong EA including, but not limited to:

- Updated Disciplinary Clause,
- Updated Parental/ Primary Carer and return to work clauses,
- Special Maternity Leave Clause,
- Overtime and Superannuation improvements,
- Updates to Driver Only Shifts,
- New Menstrual and Menopause leave clause,
- Improved roster clauses,
- Updated Job-Share clause,
- Updated Drivers facilities.

Keep an eye out for Depot meetings that will take place to provide in person updates on the progress of bargaining.

V/Line Committee Applications

It was great to see the large number of applications that had been submitted for the numerous working parties that were advertised. These positions were endorsed at the Loco Divisional Committee meeting and the successful candidates have been informed. Congratulations and we look forward to working with everyone.

Rail Train Services (RTS)

Enterprise Agreement Negotiations

Bargaining has already commenced with RTS to replace their EA and we have had a number of meetings with the company. We are seeking to bring RTS employee conditions up to an industry standard and ensure they are not paid any less than the employees from other operators that they are working alongside.

Marc Marotta -

We are thrilled that Marc Marotta has agreed to continue on with the Locomotive Division as an executive officer and we reflect on a lifetime of service provided by Marc to the Union and railway members.

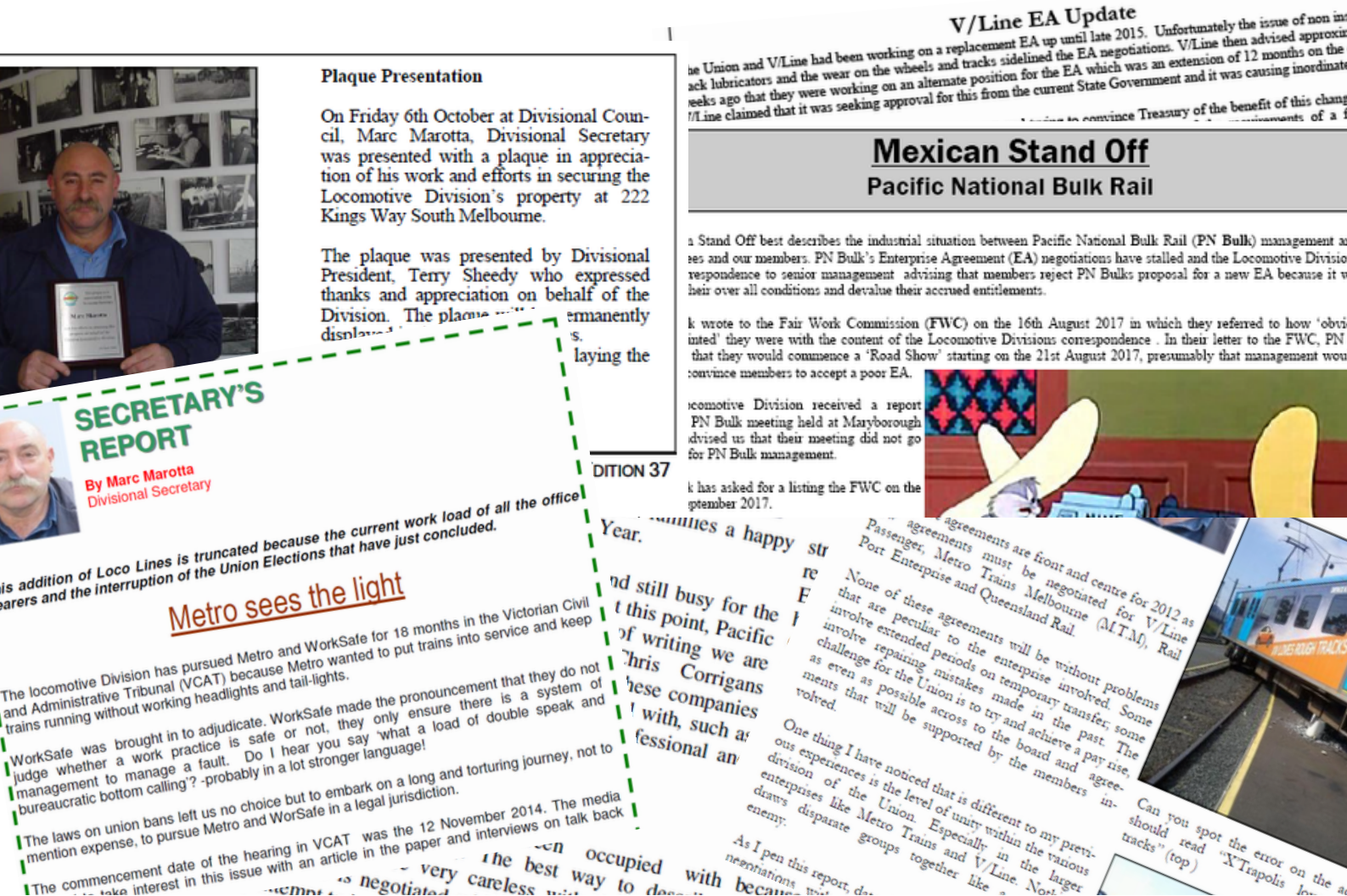
Starting on the railways over 47 years ago, Marc had respectfully held the position of RTBU Branch President and Locomotive Divisional Secretary for over 30 years, leading the team to win some of the best conditions in the industry and fighting to retain these conditions every day.

The addition of Marc will increase our team of employees to 4. We run a cost-effective team of essential staff who get the job done for you (in comparison the Rail Division has 15 employees).

Marc performs work for us including support and EA negotiations. Given his success at getting results, you won't be surprised to hear he was asked to be on the Trammies bargaining team in their EA negotiations. He is doing this as well as representing Rail Div members in Metro and V/Line negotiations who do not want to be represented by the Rail Div officials

In his time at the Union Marc has been on the negotiation team for almost 20 different EA's attending hundreds of meetings and also representing 100's of members in disciplinary meetings. Some of you are here today because of Marcs skill, care and experience.

We congratulate Marc on his new role with us and the important work he is doing for other members and look forward to continuing to gain the benefit of his vast knowledge and expertise.



so long, but not goodbye





PRESIDENTS REPORT

WAYNE HICKS
DIVISIONAL PRESIDENT

Projects, projects, projects

This is my 4th term as President of the Locomotive Division, and I would like to thank the members who have continually supported me.

As a collective, we strive to achieve the most beneficial outcomes for our members. Whilst this is not always achievable and we are not always going to be popular, we can only work within the parameters of the Enterprise Agreements, award systems and the Law.

There was a lot of projects and matters we dealt with in the previous year with numerous issues being closed off and others we continue to fight for. Below are current projects we are working on amongst every day Union representations and EA bargaining.

Electronic Train Order (ETO): The proposed changes to the existing Train Order system (paper based) have been ongoing since 2019 with no resolution in sight. For the system to operate effectively, positive end of train detection, electronic graphing, and a rule book to match the functionality of ETO's must be included in stage one (North Bendigo to Deniliquin). Rail Projects Victoria and Project Managers are continually pushing this back to be included in stage 2. The problem is there is no funding for stage 2. A meeting took place between the Union and V/Line management and the recommendation is to facilitate a risk assessment for the ETO project.

National Rail Regulator: The National Rail Regulator has mandated for Rail Companies within Australia to install inward facing cameras with audio on all rolling stock with the implementation to be completed within 7 years. This is despite the Union as a collective Australia wide rejecting these proposals. Union delegates are currently in discussions with the Regulator to put boundaries around the collection of this data and to stop companies having a live feed at any time. Union delegates have proposed that the data only be obtained on an incident-based process. The discussions are still ongoing with no outcome pending and due to this, the Project has been put on hold until further notice.

Alternative Proceed Authority: Alternative Proceed Authority (APA) is a safe working system that ARTC introduced after a fire in a relay box rendered the system disabled at Wallan. This was prior to the fatal incident that occurred at Wallan on 20th February 2020. It was a primitive system then and ARTC now want to reintroduce this with modifications to be able to run at line speed in a degraded mode. The locomotive division is awaiting meetings with V/Line and ARTC to highlight the deficiencies with this system. It is imperative to wait for the recommendations from the coronial inquest and the Australian Transport Bureau (ATSB) and court proceedings prior to considering any implementation.

Victorian Rule Book: Rail Industry Standards Board (RISSB) were contracted by the Victorian Government to update and modernise the 1994 Victorian Rule Book and align with the National Rule Book model as far as practical. Despite meetings by the working group taking place over a couple of years, project managers have come and gone, and the Rule Book has been put on the shelf to gather dust. Further discussions about the future progression of the Rule Book will occur this year.

Standard Gauge VLocitys: Standard gauge VLocitys have been bottoming out (suspension) from day one. Although this issue had been raised with the appropriate authorities, due to political pressure and the upcoming election at the time, the VLocity's were put into regular revenue service with that fault not rectified. As a result of a bolt sheering off the suspension, the entire standard gauge VLocity fleet was withdrawn from service. After several meetings, a three car Standard Gauge unit was equipped with measuring equipment for a test run from Melbourne to Albury and return. Results revealed that there were 74 bottoming out events for both journeys. ARTC track personnel were on board to check the ride characteristics along with the track conditions and locations that require attention.

Following a data analysis by engineers, a modification was made to the suspension of the test VLocity and a second test run took place from Melbourne to Albury and return. Despite the severity being reduced, additional modifications are likely after further data collection and analysis is conducted.

Meetings have occurred between the Union and V/Line management to reintroduce revenue services to Albury. Until modifications are completed to alleviate the fault, vehicle speeds on the Standard gauge are restricted to 100kph.

Tread Plate Extensions: With the gap between the platform and Standard Gauge VLocity's, tread plate extensions have been fitted on all doors except the driving ends to close the gaps between the train and platform. Despite V/Line believing this to be a permanent solution, a Provisional Improvement Notice (PIN) was issued and WorkSafe became involved. The recommendation of WorkSafe was that minor modifications were required in the interim until a more permanent arrangement was agreed to and implemented.

V/Line requested a 3-month extension on the current PIN which was granted. V/Line have since tried to close the PIN and Work Safe were once again brought in.

The WorkSafe engineers will be meeting with myself and V/Line to come up with a more permanent solution this year.

South Dynon: With the increase of VLocity's and storage becoming a premium, modifications have occurred and will continue to take place over the next couple of years to accommodate this increase.

There will also be several changes to the accommodation for train crews, shunters and yard foremen until permanent facilities are constructed in the old South Dynon workshop area. Management's intent is to have the shunters work the yard which will displace the second person on the rolling stock. However, with the increased workload at South Dynon, and management's commitment that there will be 12 additional shifts per day (24/7), train crews will not be disadvantaged. Before this occurs, South Dynon procedures and agreements will be reviewed and agreed upon prior to implementation.

On 6th July, the peppercorn tree at South Dynon will be removed and in its place, a large portable will be installed on the North side near the fuel point. This will be used as an overflow for train crews and shunters, should the current meal room/standby room be full.

Radio Shunting: Risk assessments have recommenced for Southern Cross radio shunting. This has been an ongoing item for many years. Meetings with the Loco Division, Shunters, OH&S Reps have taken place and will continue until a resolution is obtained

VLocity Whistles :Train crew audits have shown that whistles have not been recorded on the data logger. it has been revealed that Whistles that are operated for less than point one of a second will not record.

Be mindful in the use of your whistle to avoid any repercussions.

Enterprise Agreement: Negotiations for the new V/Line Enterprise Agreement have commenced with the parties having their first meeting. We anticipate weekly meetings to be scheduled. Members will be advised as more details become available.

Marquees Southern Cross Covid marquees will remain in place for another winter to observe any spikes in Covid over that period. The Geelong Marquee will be removed.

TRAINEE UPDATE

Trainees that have recently passed for driving, are requested to notify the office on 9682 1122 to have your details updated.

Mobile Phones There have been a number of reportable occurrences involving the use of mobile phones whilst conducting safe working duties. ONRSR can and will at any time obtain your phone records if an incident is reported.

Train Crews are reminded to switch off your phones and place in your bag as per OPR 260



Social Media: To alleviate any repercussions in your use of social media such as Facebook, it is advisable to remove any reference in your profile to being a V/Line employee.

Any perceived adverse or inappropriate comments that you make on Social Media may have an effect on your employment.

Rostering System: The new rostering system, formatted in excel, will be trialed at Geelong and Seymour and is expected to be implemented fully by 26th July. Printing will be available from a desktop computer only. The Hastas rostering system, which will in turn replace the excel system, is anticipated to be rolled out in 2026

Weekly Planner: The weekly planner was removed from country rosters due to a shortage of workforce controllers.

Despite numerous attempts to have the planner reinstated, this fell on deaf ears and to quote management, "it's not in the Enterprise agreement". Apparently this will be resolved with the implementation of the "excel" rostering system

Taxi Issues: Issues with Taxis are still occurring, and train crews are reminded to report any issues that you encounter.

Facilities: It is suggested that new train crew facilities at Southern Cross will become a State Project. The proposal is to locate these in the vicinity of the Shunters Carpark. As further developments occur, we will advise members accordingly.

Lockers: More funding has been sourced for lockers to be installed in the tissue box. With space being at a premium, the proposal from Management is to remove the gym and position female lockers in its place. There is no proposal for the relocation of the gym at this stage. This proposal is unsatisfactory and will be met with resistance.

In addition to this, there will be an extra 19 male lockers on level 2 in the tissue box.

Waurin Ponds Stabling Yard: Training has commenced in the Waurin Ponds stabling yard for Geelong train crews only. Southern Cross train crews will not be trained at this location.

Acknowledgement

I would personally like to thank John Marotta and Howard Hand for their service and contribution to the Union Movement throughout the years. I wish them the very best in their retirement.

Congratulations to Paris Jolly, newly elected Locomotive Divisional Secretary and Jim Chrysostomou, continuing in his current role as Assistant Secretary of the Locomotive Division along with all the new incumbents to the Locomotive division.

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It would be remiss of me not to make a special mention to Marc Marotta. Marc is a staunch unionist who has served the Locomotive Division for many years. Marc has not only been a role model and mentor to many union officials, including myself, but his dedication and loyalty to the Union is unprecedented. His achievements are outstanding and far too many to list individually and he has always had the members welfare and best interests at heart.

It has been an absolute honour to have worked with Marc and I sincerely thank him for his outstanding dedication and commitment to the union. To conclude, I wish Marc all the best in his future endeavours.

Regards,
Wayne



VICE PRESIDENT/ PN REPORT

CATHY NOONE
DIVISIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT

SIGNAL SIGHTING

The Pacific National Signals Sighting team, including Maryborough Signal Sighting representative at PN Freight, Clint Hickson, have been very busy ensuring that Signals are up to scratch and making the relevant suggestions to the company to ensure safety of all our members.

At the time of writing the team inspected Korong Vale, Wiltshire Loop, Ballarat, Ararat and Mildura Lines and the Maryborough Yard with suggestions including removal of old signage, clean-ups of vegetation, upgrades to signage and even updates to training where required.

Korong Vale Signal Sighting.

KVE26

- We sighted the position of the UP-direction home signal KVE26 and after deliberation decided that the route indicator arrow should be changed from straight up arrow to a left arrow for the diverge movement as currently captured by the point banner.
- A path / pad around the new point machine will also be required and this was thankfully agreed to by V/line. We noted that the path from the Up Home Signal to the point machine looks ok.

KVE7WI Up end.

- On the Up end there will also be a Siemens Theatre Box at the fouling point and not the actual points with the fouling point board between both roads also being removed and replaced with a Clearance Point board in each road as agreed to by V/line and PN.

KVE7WI Down end.

- On the Down end a Siemens Theatre Box will be placed at the fouling point, not the actual points. The fouling point board between both roads will be removed and replaced with a Clearance Point board in each road as agreed to by V/line and PN.
- The old V/line Signage for appropriate authority will be removed and the level crossing speed board updated to 25 second warning type.

KVE06

- The position of the Down direction home signal KVE06 was sighted and for Safe Working procedures a path will be provided for Train Crew from in front of KVE06 to the point machine.

KVE04

- The team sighted the position of The Down direction Distant signal KVE04 which is 1140m prior to KVE06. The signals will not "Bleed" in together as the KVE04 is around a corner prior to KVE06.

Junction points.

The junction points are not part of this project and it was made clear that no redundancy was built into the project, however while the junction can be signaled at a later date if necessary, PN has suggested updating of the current Advisory board in the Down direction. It was advised that the sign will be amended to remove the word "STOP" and to be replaced with "Ensure Junction Points are set for Intended movement".

V/Line suggested that there be two additional boards on both branches in the Up direction before the points again with the same words "Ensure Junction Points are set for Intended movement".

As per their policies and procedures, PN's requirement is to Stop and check points and not trail the junction points. However other operators being of WSA type will trail through them as designed.

There will also be a renewal of 25 KPH speed boards at the Junction Points x 3.

Train Order Clearance Point Board.

For Train Order Safe working purposes, a new Clearance Point board will be placed in the up Direction 2500m past the loop. This will be square with a "Neutral" blank front for Down Trains and Yellow Dot for Train Order working in the up direction.

No Signals will be wrong sided, and all signals will be "Drivers Side" of the Locomotive cab. I am pleased to say V/line were very accommodating with our concerns.

The Commissioning date is TBC and usual safe working viewing requirements will be required for Train Crew.

Down Direction location Board.

The Down Direction location board was situated 2500 meters prior to the loop.

We raised the question of less warning as KVE04 is 1140m from the loop.

It was agreed that the signal light would be seen from a much further distance than the reflective board and the signal position will be covered in route knowledge siding trips. The Down Direction location board will now be removed as a result.

Wilrshire Loop

At time of writing we confirmed the positions of the Down Distant Signal, Down Home Signal, Up Distant Signal and UP Home Signal and raised concerns of required tree removal for all.

- The Down Distant Signal Diverge speed of 30kph or 40 kph is still to be confirmed.
- With the Down Home Signal we confirmed right hand side route indicator for left hand diverge and Left Arrow and the distance from signal to points. We made a Note that the Down End theatre box is to be on observers' side of loop track. Associated paths for SPAD mitigation.
- The UP Home Signal right hand side route indicator for straight track, Upwards arrow and distance from signal to points was confirm and we also Noted the UP End theatre box to be on observers' side of loop track. Associated paths SPAD mitigation.

Maryborough Signal Sighting

Ballarat Line.

There will be a lot of signal relocations and vegetation removal on the Ballarat Line.

- There will be a repositioning of the New Home Signal MYB4 from the proposed position to 278 meters towards the UP direction.
- The new Proposed Home Signal MYB8 will also be relocated as we were not happy with the proposed position in the cutting on a bend. It will be moved to the current position of the Automatic Signal, approx 200 meters in the UP direction.
- The Existing Lean Street Signal MYB10 will also be relocated 400 meters in the UP direction on account of V/Line Standard.
- Train Crew will still have road access to MYB8 and signal location will reduce noise complaints as Trains will be required to stop at MYB8 and not MYB10.
- MYB6 will remain in its current position.

Maryborough Yard.

The team discussed and came to an agreement on the Signal Positions and Type of Home Signals for 2 and 3 road UP End (Signals MYB16 and MYB14) positions and Type of Dwarf Signals for 2 and 3 road Down End (Signals MYB34 and MYB36).

We decided to have these signals wrong sided account of extra track length and position of MYB34 near Main line.

We also finalised discussions on:

- Position of Home Departure signal MYB32 – New Signal.
- Position of Dwarf signal MYB38 that controls the entry of Number 2 and 3 road.
- New path for 2 Road.

There were some SAFETY concerns on the Signal Numbering convention but this has been addressed with V/line safe working. However we will continue to advocate for upgrading the lighting as per New LED lights at North Geelong C box or base of power poles to be painted white.

Ararat Line.

The Ararat line required some vegetation clean ups and the other safety mitigations.

- The NE1911 Repeating signal will remain in its current position but will have the availability to display a "Reduce to Medium Speed" aspect. We agreed on the position for MYB2BI Banner Indicator but made a note of "Wrong Sided".
- To allow for "Clear Medium Speed" and "Low Speed Caution", we agreed to MYB2 new aspect changes. The project will provide a changeover pad for Train Crew if crew change unavailable on platform.
- It was also decided that to avoid confusion there will be no 30KPH boards as proposed. The 30KPH running will be captured with an update to the Network Service Plan.

Mildura Line.

On The Mildura Line the V/Line Train Crew and PN Train Crew were concerned on the relocation of MYB26 Home Arrival Signal, nevertheless, after discussions it was agreed to keep MYB26 in its current position.

The Interlocking however will be upgraded for more efficient Train Running and 4 Road will be able to be used. No changes to Fuel Point siding has occurred and can still be used for Broad Gauge Locomotive staging.

As Part of PN's HSR Siding inspection the lighting should be upgraded to new V/Line Spec as per the Maryborough Velocity compound that has been recently done.

"Thank You"

To our V/Line Signal Sighting and Safe working Counterparts, thank you for your help and assistance in keeping or members safe.

Murray Basin Rail Project

On another topic at Mildura, it is disappointing that Rail Projects Victoria had failed to reach out to Central Goldfields Shire council and the Rail Revival Alliance Victoria regarding a stakeholder submission for the record, in regards to additional Train staging facilities lost under the Murray Basin Rail Project Mk1.

It is something that the Locomotive Division supports and which the Rail Revival Alliance Victoria (RRA) have been working on for quite some time to get passenger services back to Mildura. We have asked RRA President Noel Laidlaw to provide members a report, attached below. We thank Noel for his contribution.

LABOR'S STATE CONFERENCE OVERWHELMINGLY CALLS FOR THE REINTRODUCTION OF PASSENGER RAIL SERVICES TO MILDURA

NOEL LAIDLAW
PRESIDENT - RAIL REVIVAL
ALLIANCE VICTORIA INC.

At the 2023 State ALP conference held over the weekend of 24 and 25 June, a resolution was overwhelming passed calling for the reintroduction of passenger rail services to Mildura. The motion was moved by Mildura FEA delegate Tony Alessi.

The motion read:

The Victorian Branch of the ALP has supported the return of passenger rail to Mildura. It has been endorsed by this conference and presented in our policy platform. Works conducted to upgrade the rail lines in the Murray Basin, including to Mildura, have taken the first step in re-establishing viable rail services to the region. But further steps are necessary, to not only give primary producers direct access to rail, but also to the many passengers who stand to benefit from a more integrated network.

This conference notes the numerous submissions, proposals, and cost/benefit analyses made to the Minister from community, industry and rank & file groups that remain outstanding and require further details, direction and action. They include the reinstatement of the critical direct freight rail route to ports via Ballarat. We must move swiftly to realise the benefits of an integrated network and provide certainty to prospective users in turning the tide on Kennett era closures and privatisation.

To progress this matter and live up to our commitments to the people of Victoria call on the Minister to progress planning to develop options for the consideration of stake holders,

The motion followed a similar resolution passed at the 2018 State Conference which endorsed the policy to have passenger trains returned to Mildura.

Services to Horsham and Mildura were axed by the then Liberal Premier Jeff Kennett in 1993. Labor promised to return these services since that time but despite being in office, it has failed to keep its promises.

The return of these passenger services has been complicated by the Murray Basin Rail Standardisation Project which was to standardise all of the rail North of Maryborough. A dual gauge section of line was to connect Maryborough with Gheringhap (just outside of Geelong) and the line between Maryborough and Ararat was to be standardised and reopened.

This work was plagued by poor management, cost over-runs and shoddy workmanship.

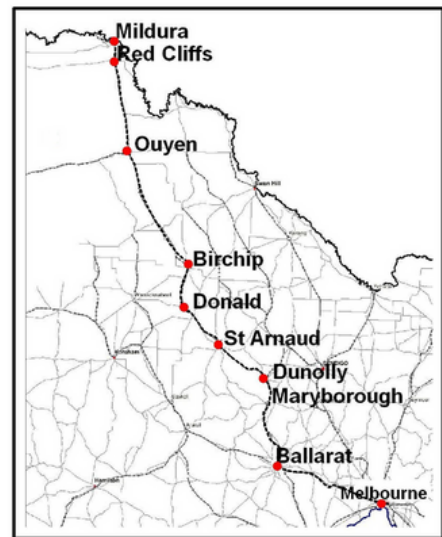
Following the intervention of the Auditor-General, the projected was rescoped and the Maryborough to Gheringhap dual gauge was abandoned.

This now means there is no directed connection to Geelong or Melbourne except via Ararat. This adds a considerable amount of additional kilometers and time to the trip. This is creating serious operational issues for existing freight operators on the line with a minimum of 180 additional km's per trip now made part of the journey.

If a passenger train from Mildura was to take the standard gauge route to Melbourne, a time line of 14 hours would be expected as it is forced to go via Ararat and North Geelong.

The only way forward is to accept that a change of train will be necessary if travel times are to be kept at a minimum.

Rail Revival Alliance Victoria Inc. put forward a proposal before the last election for one such proposal.



The introduction of passenger services on this line allows the community to reap the benefit of the significant capital invested in the Murray Basin Rail Plan. It neatly integrates with existing freight services on the line and ensures that the facilities are maintained to passenger-standard ensuring higher speeds, ongoing maintenance commitments from government and consistent monitoring of track quality. This is the most efficient use of the train and sees the lowest capital cost of investment. North of Maryborough, this train will run on the newly-converted standard gauge rail line to Mildura.

The advantages of this proposal:

- Efficient use of one standard gauge N Set. They are described as the VLine Classic fleet and which has been modernised and upgraded.
- Use of refurbished N Class rolling stock, thus less capital investment. With the introduction of VLocity sets to the Shepparton and Albury services, there is an excess of rolling stock which has been retired from there services. These sets can immediately into service for the Mildura train.
- Faster connection in and out of Melbourne using existing VLocity service for part of the journey between Melbourne and Maryborough.

This proposal services the student populations at Ballarat as well as Melbourne. It would also allow passengers to spend time in the intermediate towns along the line as well as Mildura

The proposal uses Maryborough as the interface between the VLine VLocity service and the proposed Mildura passenger extension. It works well operationally as the Maryborough platform is sufficiently long to allow the VLocity set and the N Set to both occupy the same platform.

The proposed timetable for this service is shown below.

Some level crossings will require upgrades and some other operational matters will require some additional capital expenditure.

Most of the stations along the line are fit for purpose or will require very additional expenditure to achieve that status apart from Dunolly which will require a major renovations as it has been allowed to fall into a very dilapidated state.

Rail Revival President, Noel Laidlaw said that this proposal was the simplest and cheapest proposal that would have services into Mildura in the shortest period of time .

Our view is that this service should be introduced as soon as possible and trialled for three or five years. If the government of the day is conformable with the level of support that this service is attracting, then a plan should then be devised to update the rolling stock, line speeds and frequency of service to provide an enhanced passenger service to the North-West.

Km from Melbourne		Proposed Timetable	Km from Melbourne		Proposed Timetable
		Mon Wed Fri			Sun Tue Thur
		VLocity			N Set
Melbourne		9.16	Mildura	573	8.50
Ballarat	119	10.46	Red Cliffs	558	9.04
Maryborough (arr)	187	11.41	Ouyen	471	10.22
change		N Set	Birchip	353	12.07
Maryborough (dep)	187	12.01	Donald	301	12.54
Dunolly	209	12.21	St Arnaud	262	13.29
St Arnaud	262	13.08	Dunolly	209	14.07
Donald	301	13.43	Maryborough (arr)	187	14.27
Birchip	353	14.29	change		VLocity
Ouyen	471	16.14	Maryborough (dep)	187	14.50
Red Cliffs	558	17.31	Ballarat	119	15.39
Mildura	573	17.44	Melbourne	0	17.22
		8 Hours 28 Mins			8 hrs 32 mins

Above: The proposed timetable for the passenger service proposed by the Rail Revival Alliance Victoria



Noel Laidlaw
President
Rail Revival Alliance Victoria Inc.
laidlaw@dodo.com.au



ASSIST.SECRETARY'S REPORT

JIM CHRYSOSTOMOU
DIVISIONAL ASSISTANT SECRETARY

ENTERPRISE BARGAINING- Sydney Trains

The NSW branch of the RTBU as part of its broader industrial campaign for an enterprise agreement engaged in activity that allowed for members of the public to have what it called 'Free Travel days' by switching off the opal gates (equivalent of MYKI card readers). The NSW government subsequently initiated Federal Court proceedings. The court application was based on several claims which included that the RTBU in NSW acted unlawfully during days in August and September 2022 on the basis that the action taken was not authorised by a protected action ballot order from the Fair Work Commission.

If proven that the action taken was unlawful, the RTBU could face heavy penalties and a significant sum of compensation payable to the government for taking the unprotected action. This would potentially run into the millions of dollars. Justice Reapers views were that "the potentially heavy price that may result if the action was not lawful".

The matter that was before the court would determine the following three issues as part of the proceedings:

1. Whether leaving the Opal gates open on a number of days in August and September constituted industrial action under section 19 of the Fair Work Act (FW Act);
2. Whether the protected action ballot declared on February 9 authorised the industrial action and whether it thereby met the additional requirement in section 409(2) of the FW Act; and
3. Whether industrial action proposed (and later withdrawn) for October 20 in the form of station staff deactivating Opal gates amounted to industrial action under section 19 of the FW Act.

Update Since NSW Government Initiates Federal Court Proceedings against the RTBU NSW:

The RTBU NSW and the NSW Government have entered into an in principle agreement that would see (1) the RTBU not taking any further protected action and, (2) the Fair Work Commission arbitrating on remaining items that have not yet been agreed to.

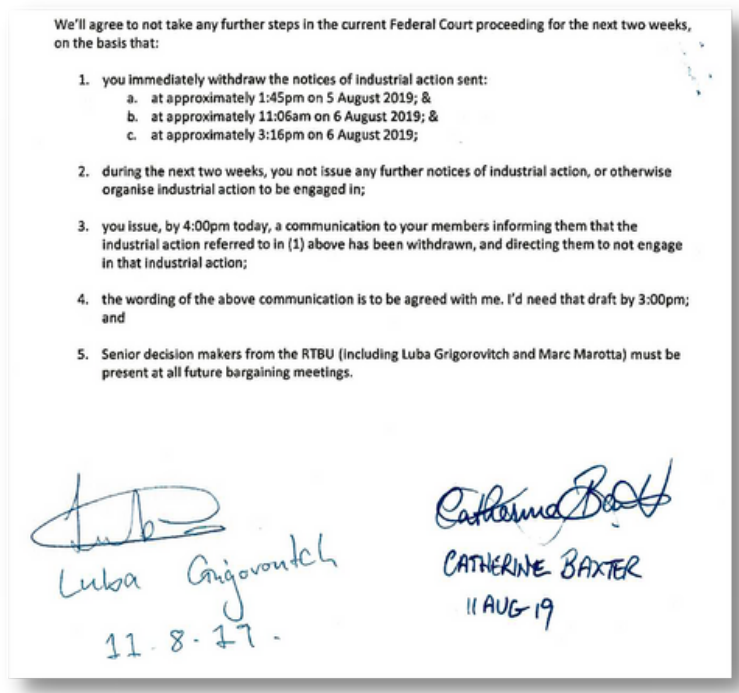
The proposed agreement was voted up by the Membership which was followed on 20 February 2023 by the NSW government discontinuing/withdrawing their federal court application against the RTBU. The RTBU NSW have promoted this outcome as a "massive win for workers", surely this is not spin? And sure it may be a remarkable coincidence that off the back of court proceedings that would have seen the RTBU up for heavy penalties and compensation that an Enterprise Agreement is abruptly settled followed by the withdrawal of the court action...or could there be something more to the events?

Free Travel 'Action' in NSW 2023 v Victoria 2019

To most Members in Victoria covered by the Metro Enterprise Agreement the 'Free travel days' and the Federal court proceedings that followed in NSW would sound eerily familiar. The only difference is that no NSW RTBU official was preselected for a safe seat in politics.

The circumstances that led to the federal court proceedings in both states is indicative of a broader problem within the leadership of the various state and national officeholders of the RTBU. That is one of competence, or lack thereof. The price that is paid by Members is financial in addition to losing their job security.

To refresh Members memories please see below agreement between the former Branch Secretary of the RTBU Vic and the Metro Trains Chief Operation Officer after Federal Court proceedings were initiated against the RTBU Vic for the 'free travel days'.



This was reported to Members ***“Over the course of the weekend the RTBU has had constructive conversations with Metro management. As a show of good faith we have decided to withdraw all industrial action items for the weeks of the 12 and 19 of August.”*** The remarkable comparison between the Victorian spin and the sophistry “massive win for workers” statement by the RTBU NSW is uncanny.

Challenges ahead:

One of the biggest problems Unions face is when a State and National office endorse a hierarchical ideology which supports the endorsement of a political framework. This is as opposed to a Union Membership and industrial framework that supports the advancement of terms and conditions for Members in our industry.

A political environment only promotes and fosters a politically strong yet industrially weak Union and offers no longevity for the Members job security or advancement of conditions.

Is the greatest challenge a Union faces the threats of changes to law or the unlimited resources that an employer has access to; OR is it the union officials and their conduct? ***What happens*** to a union full of officials focused on self-promotion? ***What happens*** when officials are quick to look for a photo opportunity to put their fist in the air or point a finger at a member of parliament?

What happens when they are quick to speak to the media? ***What happens*** when they have no industry experience or knowledge? ***What happens*** when they are motivated by political aspirations and not the interest of Members?



Above: Picture of Mark Diamond RTBU National Secretary pointing the finger.

We know what happens!

That's why when we applied for disamalgamation we proposed rules for a new stand-alone driver union that requires officials to be rank and filers with experience in our industry. No more aspiring politicians.

We are currently also providing education and training of Members in our industry. This will enable the development of future leaders from the ground up to contribute to their industry as delegates and health and safety representatives at a proficient level which is also supported by officials in our industry with a greater knowledge and experience base. In order to be successful at this pursuit we need volunteers to come forward and get involved. If this sounds like you or something you are interested in doing please contact the Locomotive Division office or send an email to find out how to get involved.

Enterprise Bargaining 2023

There are two major Enterprise Agreements currently being negotiated in Victoria that cover the Metro Trains and V/Line Members. The events in NSW 2023 and Victoria 2015 & 2019 serve as a reminder that we all must be diligent and scrutinise every aspect of bargaining which includes RTBU communications and spin. For example if the Transport Minister provides the RTBU an “assurance” this is not a guarantee nor is it a legally enforceable instrument or contract. Simply, if it is not in your agreement, you have no protection.

As bargaining progresses we will provide updates. Also look out for meeting dates at your local depot because we will be holding EA meetings around the network shortly.



AN END OF AN ERA

MARC MAROTTA
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

AND A NEW BEGINNING

It is with great sadness but a joyful outlook that I have ended my tenure at the Locomotive Division as your Divisional Secretary. I have had the pleasure of representing the driving grade for decades and whilst challenging at times, I am proud of where we have come and what we have achieved so far. I thank my team for their support and efforts over the years and I hand over the great chair to a very committed and resolute member Paris Jolly. Congratulations Paris!

Paris has been a driver for 22 years, working at V/line and Metro Trains, with a well rounded understanding of the industry. Paris has also been an active Unionist from the beginning of his time on the railways with experience as the Metropolitan Sub-Divisional Secretary, HSR and Bargaining Representative in the last 3 Metro Trains Enterprise Agreements, as well as representing members in hundreds of meetings and the Fair Work Commission, including taking Metro to court and standing up in National and Branch meetings.

Congratulations to your amazing Locomotive Division team including Jim Chrysostomou, Wayne Hicks and our first ever female Vice President Cathy Noone!

With a number of Enterprise Agreements up for negotiation this year in 2023, I wish the team the best in this challenging time!

The Age 24/01/2020

More than 100 drivers have complained to the Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) that they are not equipped to safely run services through a new section of track built by Metro Trains at Hawksburn as part of the Metro Tunnel works.

In a bid to avert commuter chaos, Metro Trains took the dispute to the Fair Work Commission on Friday afternoon, saying the union was threatening unprotected industrial action.

ABC 30/4/2017

Marc Marotta, head of the union's locomotive division, said drivers have a legal obligation to keep themselves and their passengers safe. "We are not going to let anyone get hurt and we are not going to let anyone get killed."

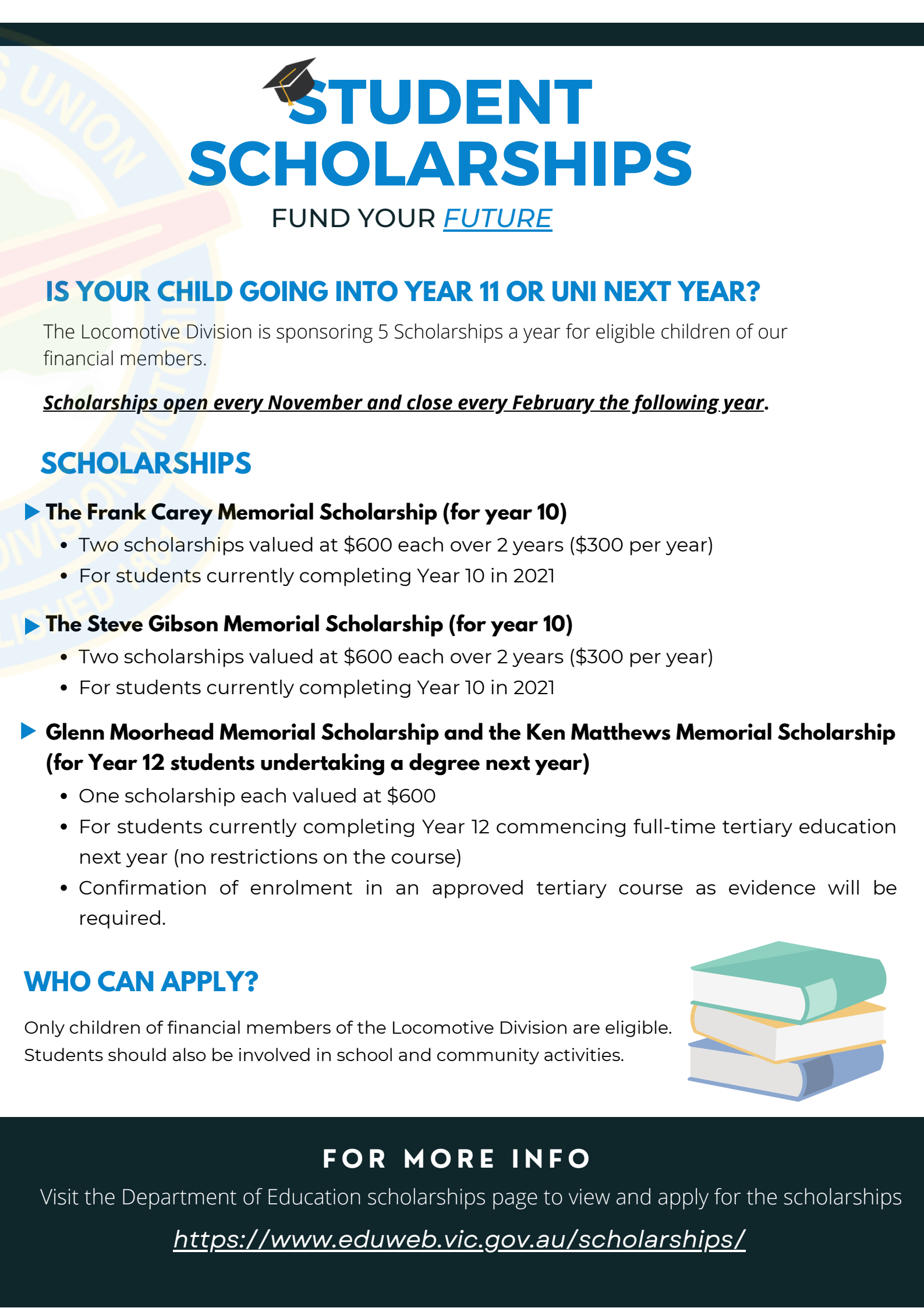
"Now the company says you will start and finish up to 120 [kilometres] away from your home and then travel home after an 11 hour shift another 120 kilometres. That's just unheard of."

The Age 22/10/2019

V/Line workers are calling for a 6 per cent annual pay rise over three years, while the state government-owned rail operator has put 2 per cent on the table. V/Line's enterprise bargaining agreement expired in June this year.

Secretary of the union's locomotive division, Marc Marotta, warned of a "long and bitter struggle", accusing V/Line of pursuing a "scorched earth policy towards employees".





STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

FUND YOUR FUTURE

IS YOUR CHILD GOING INTO YEAR 11 OR UNI NEXT YEAR?

The Locomotive Division is sponsoring 5 Scholarships a year for eligible children of our financial members.

Scholarships open every November and close every February the following year.

SCHOLARSHIPS

► The Frank Carey Memorial Scholarship (for year 10)

- Two scholarships valued at \$600 each over 2 years (\$300 per year)
- For students currently completing Year 10 in 2021

► The Steve Gibson Memorial Scholarship (for year 10)

- Two scholarships valued at \$600 each over 2 years (\$300 per year)
- For students currently completing Year 10 in 2021

► Glenn Moorhead Memorial Scholarship and the Ken Matthews Memorial Scholarship (for Year 12 students undertaking a degree next year)

- One scholarship each valued at \$600
- For students currently completing Year 12 commencing full-time tertiary education next year (no restrictions on the course)
- Confirmation of enrolment in an approved tertiary course as evidence will be required.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Only children of financial members of the Locomotive Division are eligible. Students should also be involved in school and community activities.



FOR MORE INFO

Visit the Department of Education scholarships page to view and apply for the scholarships

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

THIS TIME IN....*MAY 1977*

Unfortunately due to retirement and time constraints, the "Where is it" has now been replaced with our new segment called *This time in....* A look into the history of the Rail Industry, giving members a new take on guessing items in each edition.

Between January and May of 1977 the Victorian rail industry saw a few updates including the extension of Freight Centers, the continual introduction of Automatic Ticket Machines throughout Victoria specifically St Kilda and Heidelberg in March 1977 and the introduction of the new "C" Class Loco in May 1977.

On the 17th of May 1977 VR's most powerful diesel, the 3300 h.p "C" Class started making its way on the standard gauge running between Melbourne and Albury.

Manufactured in South Australia by Clyde Engineering, they were the first turbocharged locomotive and last of the Blue and Gold livery.

The "C" class was a heavy Locomotive and due to its weight, 135 tonnes, was used for heavy freight haulage initially on the North East Line and some on the Serviceton Line on the Broad Gauge for interstate express freights. Only after upgrades to the infrastructure were the "C" class locos able to operate on the Ballarat to Geelong line.

By 1995 all "C" class locos were transferred from V/Line to National Rail.

By 1997 after the delivery of the NR Class locomotives the "C" class was put into storage but by 1999 some were then returned to service as shunting engine with NR livery.

By 2021 all were renumbered or restored for use in Intermodal coal trains and put back to full operational status.

GUESS WHERE?:

Can you identify the station in the picture to the right in which the "C" Class ran through in May 1977.

Current members can email us at reception@rtbuvicloco.com.au with your guess. The first correct answer will be contacted and can select either one of our coffee mugs, Water bottles or takeaway coffee cup.



Above: the C503 running through the Bank Box Loop circa 1980's Photo: author unknown



Above: the C501 at Albury making its own delivery in Feb 1978- Photo: courtesy of Victorian Railways.net



Don't let your hearing loss fall on deaf ears

Hearing loss, also known as industrial deafness, is a genuine condition that affects many workers. Once someone has permanent hearing loss, there is no cure.



maurice
blackburn
lawyers

How can Maurice Blackburn help?

RTBU Locomotive Division members receive a free initial consultation with a hearing loss expert to explain all the advice and information needed for a successful claim for industrial deafness. Maurice Blackburn can arrange a referral to a hearing partner who can provide a pre-claim audiologist hearing assessment. The hearing test will determine the level of hearing loss, so that members know if they meet the required criteria before starting a claim, and so that they are accurately compensated.

Compensation depends on the level of hearing loss, but it can be anywhere from \$19,000. Maurice Blackburn will help estimate the likely amount of compensation for members at the beginning of their claim. We can also assist with helping members access hearing aids or specialised protective equipment.

What should I do if I need assistance with a hearing loss claim?

Call Maurice Blackburn today! It's always important seek legal advice, because it doesn't cost members a cent to find out your legal rights. Most people are unaware that they have not been properly compensated for their hearing loss.

The best thing to do is get in contact with the Union directly, or else you can reach out to the RTBU Locomotive Division Union Relationship Organiser Liam Fitzgerald to discuss your options. You can reach Liam at 8102 2127 or lfitzgerald@mauriceblackburn.com.au

MAURICE BLACKBURN & SAFEWILL PARTNERSHIP

For more information go to: <https://www.rtbuvicloco.com.au/maurice-blackburn/>



Maurice Blackburn is proud to continue providing free standard wills to union members, now in partnership with Safewill.



Mobile-friendly



Only takes 20 minutes to complete



Doesn't require 100 points of ID



Is finalised in a matter of days



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unionwills.com.au →



On the 7th November 2022, the Locomotive Division and Tram and Bus Division together hosted the Gender and Diversity Forum, proudly supported by Maurice Blackburn.

The theme was *Beyond Diversity: Equality and Inclusion*. We believe that everyone deserves a FAIR chance, but the gender and cultural gap unfortunately still remains in our industry.

Whilst the enterprises have broadened their intake of employees beyond the typical male gender, the facilities, workplace attitudes and general workplace bias still exists. So we opened up this discussion and asked some important questions.

Speakers included Former Yarra Trams CEO Julien Dehorney, Metro Trains CEO Raymond O'Flaherty, and V/Line CEO Matt Carrick, who all spoke about what they are doing to promote and educate all employees, including management, about the importance of and how they will provide for equitable employment and inclusion to everyone.

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, Manager of Education and Engagement Kylie Smith also attended and provided an insightful and educational lesson on the history of the Equal Opportunity Legislation and the story of "herstory", the first female pilot.

For those that could not attend the event, we had recorded each speaker and members are welcome to view the recordings on our website in the Gender and Wellbeing page or the link copied here: <https://www.rtbuvicloco.com.au/diversity-and-wellbeing/>

DIVERSITY FORUM 2022



To the left- V/Line CEO Matt Carrick speaks of the importance of having this ongoing dialogue to discuss this topic as there is a long way to go for new ideas to cover the needs of Gender and Diversity. At the time of the forum V/Line's gender split was 25% women and 75% men compared to 10 years ago with 15% women. The challenge he says is what V/Line needs to do to increase this rate and how to keep women in the industry including changing behaviour in management, having gender and equality working groups and promoting inclusion of LGBTIQ, culture and accessibility issues including improving uniforms and facilities.

To the right- VEOHRC Manager Education and Engagement Kylie Smith spoke about the landmark case against Anset for Sex Discrimination and the first female Pilot. She reflected on how far we have come but also how much we need to still do. She details legislation that now protects 20 attributes including religious belief, breastfeeding, parental status, disability and race to name a few on-top of the original two being only sex and marital status. The most recent being included in May 2022 being protections against discrimination on the basis of trade, profession or occupation. Changes are still occurring to protect workers.



To the right- Former Yarra Trams CEO Julien Dehorney speaks of the challenges of skills shortages and trying to attract talented people who are also representative and reflective of the community they serve. Mr Dehorney advised that in 2009 Yarra Trams only had 9% of female employees, but were at 26% at the time of the forum. By the end of 2024 the goal was to reach 30%. But he said there's more to do. He started with adding female executive members, improved facilities and culture and looking into improving part time drivers rosters with further improvements to be made.

To the left- Metro Trains CEO Raymond O'Flaherty discussed how Metro is making progress with 31% out of a 6800 team being women. Whilst Stations and Authorised officers have greater gender diversity, Rolling stock remain male dominated. Mr O'Flaherty also discussed that about 30% of managers are now women and Metro is seeing more and more women progressing into higher positions. Metro is also working to improve social inclusion and breaking the barrier to employment, equal gender pay, prayer rooms and facilities, flexible work conditions and relaunching the "think twice" program to educate people about what is acceptable in the workplace.





LEGAL REPORT

JENNA VARDI
SENIOR LEGAL OFFICER

LEGAL UPDATES

Stronger Flexible Work Laws

On 6 June 2023 the laws for flexible work arrangements changes significantly in a positive way.

Firstly, the changes impose a greater obligation on employers to make genuine efforts to reach an agreement with the employee about flexible work. Under the new laws, employers must respond to a flexible work arrangement request within 21 days and must either:

1. accept the request;
2. discuss the matter with the employee, reach an agreement that differs from the original request and set out the agreed change and implement it; or
3. Refuse the request.

An employer may only refuse a request if it has genuinely attempted to make changes to the employee's working arrangements to accommodate the reasons for the request and the employer has reasonable business grounds to refuse the request.

Secondly, and very importantly, under the new laws an employee can appeal an employer's refusal or failure to respond to a request to the Fair Work Commission.

Before, there was no option of review. Now, an employee can bring a dispute to the Fair Work Commission if:

1. it cannot be resolved in the workplace,
2. the employer did not respond to the request within 21 days or the employer has refused the request within that time, and
3. the employee says these are not legitimate and not reasonable business grounds.

Once the matter is before the Commission, a conciliation will be held to attempt to resolve the matter. If not resolved, the matter can proceed to arbitration from which the Fair Work Commission may make orders which could include ordering the employer to grant the request or make specific changes to the employees working arrangements.

We welcome the changes to the laws on flexible work arrangements which strengthen an employee's right to flexible work.

Contact our office if you need help with a flexible work arrangement request

Increased Superannuation

On 1 July 2023 the superannuation guarantee percentage will increase from 10.5% to 11% of an employee's ordinary time earnings. You should check your pay slips and your superannuation account to make sure the increase is made and if it's not please contact our office.

Increased Paid Parental leave and Child Care Support

On 1 July 2023 the government paid parental leave scheme for eligible carers increases from 18 weeks to 20 weeks for babies born or adopted from 1 July 2023. On 10 July 2023 the governments Child Care Subsidy (CCS) will increase from a maximum amount of 85% to 90% and the family income limit to receive CCS is increasing from \$356,756 to \$530,000 per annum

The Locomotive Division welcome's these changes but believe these changes do not go far enough to assist working parents.

That's why in enterprise bargaining with all employers the Locomotive Division is seeking:

1. Changes to the flexible work, rostering and roster swap clauses to assist members balance their family and carer commitments;
2. increased paid parental leave for both primary and secondary carers so members can take time off work without financial loss to care for and spend time with their newborn or recently adopted child; and
3. Paid pre-natal leave so pregnant employees and their spouses have paid leave to attend routine medical appointments associated with pregnancy

NEED LEGAL ADVICE?

The Locomotive Division help with legal referrals for members to legal firms in Victoria for Workplace, Wills, Property, Victims of Crime, Family and Criminal Matters respectively.

Please contact Suzi at the Loco Office on 9682 1122 or email reception@rtbuvicloco.com.au and provide a brief description of your matter so she can make the appropriate referral.



**maurice
blackburn
lawyers**

For a referral, please contact us or download and complete the referral form in the Member Portal.

Maurice Blackburn Lawyers

All Locomotive Division members are entitled to be referred to Maurice Blackburn and receive a free 1 hour consultation with a Lawyer who specializes in either employment law, superannuation claims due to illness or injury, personal injury law, wills and estates and Social Justice.

Maurice Blackburn also provide a FREE WILL KIT to our members upon request.

DOOGUE + GEORGE
defence lawyers

Doogue + George Defence Lawyers handle Criminal matters and offer a 45 min Free Consultation in person or over the phone.

Grant & Co
LAWYERS

Grant + Co Lawyers provide fixed legal services for Property Conveyancing. They will review your contract of sale and Section 32 for FREE before starting your work. Grant + Co Lawyers can also assist with Victims of Crime claims



Berry Family Law

Berry Family Law offer a 1 hr Free Consultation as well as a 10% discount on the next appointment. Berry Family Law specialize in Separation and Divorce, Parenting, Maintenance and Property and Financial agreements under the Family Law Act.

Please contact us for a referral. Note that these firms are only recommendations- You are welcome to do your own research.



METROPOLITAN REPORT

STEPHEN BUTLER
METRO Sub-Divisional secretary

ENTITLEMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

I would like to thank everyone for the continued support which I am very grateful for. I would also like to thank the Driving Grade that has offered support and stood behind the elected officials. It is important to note that when you hear someone "saying *what is the Union doing about that?*" to remember that the Driving Grade *is* the Union. As your elected officials we rely on our members as much as you rely on us, and we are thankful for the support in fighting the many issues we face within the industry on a daily basis.

This year, like most years, has been challenging with a number of disputes taking place across the network and industries in general. At Metro alone the Metropolitan Sub Divisional Committee has represented almost 600 members, including disciplinary and payroll issues. The team have introduced a great Task management process to ensure all members are responded to quickly and have worked tirelessly ensuring members are aware of their rights and getting the correct services when required including following up with Drivers after fatalities, ensuring slips are compliant, HSR representations and preparing for the Metro 2023 EA.

The 2023 Metro EA

The Locomotive Division has put together a log of claims for the upcoming Metro EA. The log contains a list of over 30 claims that will benefit the members.

Negotiations have started, with the EA having expired 30th June 2023

Health and Safety Representatives

The last year has seen a number of new HSRs and Deputy HSRs elected to represent their designated workgroups.

HSRs play a critical role in ensuring the employer is held to account when it comes to safety and provide a way for you to raise issues within the workplace.

If you have any safety issues within your workplace please inform your HSR and the HSR Union email HSR@rtbuvicloco.com.au and we can assist in getting the hazards rectified.

Social Media and Management spy's

Technology brings with it positives and negatives, not many drivers these days are without a smart phone, tablet or laptop. Whilst social media is a good way to communicate it is also a good way for the Metro to spy on the Driving grade.

In the past few months we have represented several members in disciplinary interviews where the member has posted work related issues on member's only forums. Whilst certain sites may be members only, depending on your Facebook security settings, it will depend on who can access particular areas of that site or even your page.

The other concern is who is on the member list. Recently management received evidence from a member of a particular Drivers Facebook site of comments and photos that were posted resulting in a Driver disciplinary interview. Metro have a manager at Collins St that has the responsibility for trawling the internet for posts that may harm the company's image.

Please be aware that what you may see as just a bit of fun may be classed by Metro as damaging its reputation and a breach of its communication policy. Whilst you will get the full support of the Locomotive Division it is hard to successfully represent you if the photos or comments are saved by the spies and given to management.

Metro Safe

Last year Metro reintroduced a HSR funding procedure allowing HSR's to apply for funds to rectify issues within their designated work groups. This program, originally around a number of years ago, should be used for hazards that are NOT an imminent risk to safety but instead to improve the workplace in general. However Metro's newly provided 'guidance' is that the reintroduced '*HSR funding should be used where the safety issue poses an **imminent threat** to health and safety of staff*'. Bold emphasis added.

The above Metro 'guidance' is contradictory to the below sections of the OHS Act which state:

Section 21- Duties of employers to employees

(1) *An employer must, so far as is reasonably practicable, provide and maintain for employees of the employer a working environment that is safe and without risks to health.*

Penalty: 1800 penalty units for a natural person; 9000 penalty units for a body corporate.

Section 74- Direction to cease work, allows a HSR to issue a cease work if there is an immediate threat to health and safety:

(1) If—

(a) *an issue concerning health or safety arises at a workplace or from the conduct of the undertaking of an employer; and*

(b) *the issue concerns work which involves an immediate threat to the health or safety of any person;*

A number of HSRs had requested clarification from Metro regarding this because an imminent threat to health and safety is to be rectified **immediately** not with the use of the HSR funds which will take some time to rectify an imminent risk.

Metro Incorrect Wages

With the introduction of the mobile sign on Metro assured us that the majority of the incorrect pays should be resolved. As most of you would be aware this hasn't been the case.

One of the biggest problems that still exist is the lack of communication (including the auto generated message) from the payroll department.

If you do have a payroll issue please continue to contact payroll fortnightly, your manager and also cc the Union. If the issue does not get resolved in timely manner please request assistance from the Locomotive Division.

This is of-course one of the items on our log of claims for the upcoming EA where we will seek a clause that requires Metro to compensate the Driver if their pay is incorrect and establish timelines for communication and rectification.

Thinking About Retirement ?

If you are thinking about retiring please ensure you seek financial advice and have a chat with the Union prior to sending a letter of retirement to Metro.

This year we have had a number of Drivers that have notified their employer that they want to retire on a particular date in the future and have then changed their minds.

For example, when notifying Metro, the company will normally reply with an acceptance of the retirement email and are holding the Drivers to that date.

Whilst we have had some success when Drivers change their mind in the past Companies are taking a much harder line so it's important you make the right decision for you before notifying your company of your intention to retire.

Quintiq Slips

We have had numerous examples of non-compliances and if we are made aware prior to the event we can advocate on your behalf to ensure issue is remedied.

If you believe a quintiq slip breaches the EA please contact your Union rep and they can assist you in getting the issue resolved.

Maternity / Paternity Leave

The Parental leave entitlements of the Metro train's enterprise agreement allows the partner of the pregnant employee to take 14 weeks primary carers/maternity leave after the birth of a child.

In the last EA the Locomotive Division made subtle changes to clause 2.8 'Parental leave' including that the partner of the mother of the child can take (paid) time off as the primary carer of the child with the parental leave payment not coming out of the partners sick leave or annual as it previously would have.

Many partners wish to assume the role of the primary carer including where the mother has a cesarean birth, post-natal depression, gone back to work or you just want to spend more time with your child. The entitlement is 14 weeks at full pay or 28 weeks at half pay and must be taken within 12 months of the birth. You also must provide a statutory declaration in accordance with clause 2.8.6 (j)

'Where the employee will be the Primary Carer of the child, they are to provide a statutory declaration stating they will be the primary carer and their partner will not be the primary carer for the child.'



LOCOMOTIVE DIVISION

Metropolitan Sub Division



Adam Francis
PRESIDENT



Angela Lardner
VICE PRESIDENT



Stephen Butler
SECRETARY

Metropolitan Sub Divisional Committee



Nicole Lynch
COMMITTEE



Frank Mihalscek
COMMITTEE



Wayne Reed
COMMITTEE



Brad Galea
COMMITTEE



Petar Stankovic
COMMITTEE



Priscilla Tang
COMMITTEE



V/LINE REPORT

STEVEN COX
V/LINE SUB-DIVISIONAL SECRETARY

A YEARS WORTH OF IMPROVEMENTS

It has been a busy year with a lot of new and ongoing improvements that the Union has been pursuing at V/line including vehicle upgrades and safety improvements. These challenges are just some of the matters we have dealt with this year, and will continue to pursue on top of the EA negotiations.

V/Locities Bottoming out

At the time of writing the Standard gauge V/Locities have a 100kmh speed limit still imposed on some sections due to the continual bottoming out on the emergency springs.

The bottoming out was reported to the project on the very first day that VS93 left South Dynon in September 2021 on its transfer to Seymour to start commissioning. Unfortunately the project did not act on the reports and in November 2022 the fleet of 6 trains was withdrawn from service for 3 weeks after the discovery of a broken bolt that held the emergency spring in a compressed state.

The first test run with VS98 conducted to Albury and return to establish the locations of the bottoming out identified over 70 occurrences.

A number of further tests have since been done modifications to the emergency spring which added approximately 10mm extra clearance and a raised car ride height and a choke on the airbag air supply. These modifications made a difference but have not completely cured the problem. ARTC are also using data supplied by V/Line to assess the track condition to supplement the AK track car testing to improve the track condition.

We are still waiting for V/locity only TSR's on identified locations to be agreed to by ARTC so that the 100km/h sections can be lifted.

Handheld Radios

The Radio Committee have corrected the channel issues with the new Motorola handheld radios after a programming error. A number of new channels have been added for South Dynon and for Signal control, also a change to the channel orders and the use of the Priority and numeral buttons on the keypad to make it easier to select the channels you require.

The radios are about to be issued in late June.

V/Locality Incident at Lydiard St

The final report of the Vlocity incident at Lydiard St in Ballarat was released by the ATSB. you can read the full report here:

<https://www.atsb.gov.au/publications/investigation-reports/2020/rair/ro-2020-007>

Slip slide testing was done just prior to Christmas 2022 but was not able to recreate the conditions that drivers experience in normal running.



Tread Plates

V/Line proposed to fit 80mm tread plates to the Standard Gauge V/Locity doors behind each cab the same as those already fitted to the intermediate doors. To allow that to happen the side access steps had to be extended outwards into what is called the kinetic envelope. On a test run to Albury the profile of the proposed steps was simulated by sticking on foam blocks to all 4 steps behind the cabs.

The first problem was that it prevented anyone from being able to access the train from the ground. So they removed one step so that the train could be prepared.

The train got as far as the bridge over the Maribyrnong river near the Bunbury street tunnel before the foam blocks had made contact with the bridge. They were refitted at Somerton and then again hit the platform at Seymour. The test was then cancelled, and the train returned to Melbourne.

A second test was started from Seymour to check the rest of the line and the blocks contacted at a number of other locations too.

Despite the results of the 2 tests, the Department of Transport is still pushing for tread plates at the drivers cab despite the safety risks to drivers having to access the cab from the ground in the yard and on track.



V/Locity 107

V/Locity 107 is ready for testing from the factory and is the first with the new LED Town headlights and in cab LED downlights for trial.

Any feedback on the LED headlights during the 6 week trial would be appreciated both from drivers on VL107 and those who have seen it coming towards them.

The new downlight has a more focused light than the existing halogens but due to the angle of the roof where they are fitted could not be pointed at the desk where the light is needed. Alstom are looking for a new way to mount the light to direct it where it is needed.

We are also still waiting for the Standard Gauge stickers to be applied externally to help crews identify which gauge they are on.



SIGNAL SIGHTING REPORT

COLIN HOLLY
VLIN

DRIVERS INDICATORS

At Southern cross station on platform 7 is a drivers indicator, which is an illuminated semaphore when the signal just prior to the indicator is at proceed. When positioned in the cab the signal is not able to be viewed.

When 6 cars are placed on 7 platform against the buffers, the front of the train is close to or beyond the signal. When positioned in the cab the signal is not able to be viewed. Given the success of the banner indicator prior to the signal, we need to design an indicator that can be positioned after the signal. I originally asked for a white LED light to be displayed when the signal was at proceed, similar to the old guards indicators on the network. Westinghouse had a QLD guards indicator in their product line that was suitable, the type of unit is designed around a level crossing flashing light housing. We viewed the guard's indicator at the Port Melbourne workshop and agreed to install it on 7 platform as a trial.

The position has to be far enough forward from the signal so the driver can see it, but not too far that it reverts to the stop (extinguished) as the train moves forward. Given the car body overhang and the drivers viewing position out the front windscreen, we asked for it to be positioned around 6m from the signal. This has been in service for some time now and a second indicator will be installed on the top of 3platform for the multi SPAD signal.

Below is the drivers indicator at Southern Cross



BANNER INDICATORS

Just recently I've had a few drives ask me about the banner indicators on the network. Prior to their installation, the best way to improve viewing of a signal was to provide a co-actor. As the co-actor must be in line with the existing signal, it may only provide a few car lengths of extra viewing depending on the approach.

In 2005 the Regional Fast Rail project was proposing new V/LOCITY rail cars and TPWS for the regional network, we were advised with the vlocity braking curve, TPWS could not be guaranteed to protect a train operating above 115ph for a diverging movement. The signalling engineers chose to apply approach clearing with timing boards set for 100kph. The problem was at certain locations drivers are unable to view the signal aspects improve from the timing track due to curved approaches. We had the idea for the banner indicators, just need the signalling engineers to design and type-approve the equipment and safeworking to write some rules around the application. Given they're not the end user and the additional cost in infrastructure we received a lot of pushback. We had to convince the RFR project the new banner indicator would help with the design and improve train running.

The long section from Longwarry to Drouin, meant trains departing Longwarry had to depart on a clear green aspect, as the section was so long a yellow could not be displayed in case the driver forgot they were traveling on a warning aspect and SPAD the next signal. The project proposed to provide signals on Longwarry bank to shorten the section. The problem was freight trains could not be stopped on the bank, as it was designed as a momentum grade and not a ruling grade where the load can be lifted from a standing start should the signals be at stop.

We approach the RFR project with a concept for a banner indicator to be placed on the bank, drivers could depart Longwarry on a warning aspect and have the aspect of the next signal reinforced, overcoming the long distance between signals. This also meant a freight train couldn't be held on the grade.

To ensure acceptance from the signal engineering and maintenance, we chose existing type-approved signal equipment, a "theatre box" use as a route indicator and a "12inch" lens use as a 65 speed indicator. At the Westinghouse signal workshop, two types of white LED were displayed. The first had two white lines slightly separated by 30mm one beside the other, the second was what we currently have, one thicker LED line for each display. A porotype was installed at Footscray for signal M244, so metropolitan, regional and interstate drivers could view it. We received positive feedback and progressed with the rule changes. There was a lot of resistance from Connex trains at the time, with one manager advising me, " banner indicators will be installed on the Metropolitan network over my dead body", the rest is history. Below is the original trial location at Footscray.



COMMUNICATIONS-BASED TRAIN CONTROL (CBTC)

It's proposed to implement CBTC on the Eastern line Westall to South Yarra July 2023. Conventional non fitted CBTC trains will still run over the corridor with normal signalling.

The CBTC trains will switch over at the outer station, connect to the system and the signals will extinguish. When the driver has closed the doors, the train will drive itself to the next station. If the following train is also fitted with CBTC, the signalling will re-main extinguished. If no train has been signalled to follow or the following train is not CBTC fitted, the signalling will illuminate on the passage of that train. One of the biggest changes for V/Line will be when the following CBTC train can self-driving up close to the rear of ours. This will change how we protect the rear of our train during failures. Protecting to the red signal in the rear or to 500m will not work. Their expecting drivers to stay on the train and only go back when the assisting train is close by. Line marker boards are to be installed on some signals between South Kensington and West Footscray. The boards are to be positioned on top of signals that maybe confused when the adjacent



signal is extinguished. The main location is on the down approach to Footscray station, where the three signals are on the one gantry with a curved approach. The boards will be smaller than the ones at North Melbourne and larger than the type-approved MTM currently in use. There is a sample size in the window of the OH&S room. (old No 1 Box)

Seymour TPWS

Many signals around Seymour have been fitted with TPWS for stop and overspeed enforcement. They have also activated the 48kph overspeeds for trains departing from Seymour platform. In particular the up departure signal from No2 platform, the signal displays Clear Normal Speed, the overspeed is active, as the track speed is 40kph. On the up approach into Seymour from Shepparton, the Medium Speed Warning aspect will have a 48kph overspeed, with a second mid-section overspeed fitted so the driver doesn't increase speed between signals.

On the way out, Id like to leave this note.

My initial interest in railways kicked off back in about 1966. As a 14 year old I did a morning paper round in Cheltenham. First (unofficial) stop each morning was the Cheltenham signal box. In exchange for a free paper and a magazine or two, Albert the signalman, who was probably only in his 20's at the time, would have hot Milo and toast ready for me. Great bloke, lots of laughs and of course I soon picked up quite a bit about signals, interlocking, bell instruments, double line block etc as he read the paper and I scoffed down breakfast.

There were all these things called 'Rules and Regulations' as well. It all seemed to make sense and had some logic to it. It appealed to me. Albert and I remained good mates, however when Dad got transferred to Benalla at the end of 68, that introductory period to the railway environment ended.

Jump ahead 4 years to 1972 and Id just left school in Benalla. A few of us had decided that we wanted to head to the city and share a place in Melb (big adventure for country school leavers) and while having a few end of year beers at a mates place, his dad who was a 'Ganger' at Benalla suggested that if I wanted immediate employment, I should join the railways, but certainly not as a ganger like him, nah, his advice was to get into a cushy clerical job in town somewhere.

Four of us moved to Cromwell Rd, Toorak (why not?) and in Jan 72 I did my first railway medical. I remember my eyesight wasn't 100%, but as I wasn't chasing a safeworking job at that time, that was ok. I did a bit of training in the Booking Office at

Newport and Seaholme and was soon transferred as Junior Clerk to Sth Kensington. Yeah, there once was an actual station building there! They were good times, I met my current partner Maggie during these times, she worked at the VR Printing Works in Laurens St and in order for her to get her employees quarter fare rail pass, she had to hand over name, age, address etc. to the OIC at the booking office (me!)

The SM in charge was at North Melb, so I was pretty much left to my own devices (or vices). I did however see hundreds of trains pass through Sth Ken, and always had the nagging feeling that being a train driver would have been the 'real' railway job. But in those days the Traffic Branch and the Rolling Stock Branch had something like 'The Bridge of Khazad-dum' between them.' Thou Shalt Not Pass' between one and the other. You literally had to resign, then rejoin the industry to make that move.

Another problem was creeping in at this time. Living in a shared house with guitars, drums amps and 3 other 'wannabe' musicians, I had stuff all chance of sleeping and /or making it to work on time to open Sth Ken station at 4.48 each morning. I got busted every time I was late. There was a Traffic Inspector, George Gregson, on the first Up train each morning. I had to do something before I got sacked. George loved busting me every second morning on early shift and my attendance record was beginning to look rather abysmal as well.

I spotted job in the Weekly Notice at The West Tower. Records Clerk.

At least if I was a few minutes late now and then it wasn't the end of the world. An interesting place to work. The hump was in full use (24/7) in those days, but my God, the job of the Records Clerk was the pits. Trains would come in and the Guards Running Sheets were delivered to me. These were supposed to show the consist of trains ie. wagons in correct order, origin and destination. They were faded out carbon copies, hand written by blokes walking beside trains, in the bush, in the rain, in the dark, with a dodgy pen. (Thumbnail dipped in tar stuff).Indecipherable scrawl. And I was meant to record where all these wagons were, and where they were going! Whole trains just went straight in the bin. The system did get changed. It had to. I got out of there as well and took a job at what was then Melbourne Yard, 4 Shed (9 to 5) dealing with customers.

So whilst at 4 Shed, I spotted another advertisement in the Weekly Notice. For anyone who was qualified, to enrol for a Diploma of Transport Administration at RMIT. I'd even be paid to attend. I was given every Tues and Thurs mornings off to attend RMIT which I gratefully accepted. The year rolled on and I thought, 'There are going to be embarrassing questions asked eventually' Sure, Id enrolled, but...you can guess the rest. Lots of good bands, late nights at the Station Hotel in Prahran, and Tues and Thurs mornings to sleep in and recover, and little to zero attendance at RMIT. I had to do something before I got sacked (heard that before?) It was time to cut my ties with the rail industry. Get out with some kind of record and integrity intact.

IT WAS A GOOD TRIP.

Those events all took place during 72. Between then and 1980 I travelled, married, started my family and bought a house back in Benalla.

So again, over a few beers, I was chatting to a friend who was working as a Guard on the railways at Benalla. He told me that they were short of trainee drivers and if he could have transferred over to the Rolling Stock grade, he would. But like I said earlier, he had to resign to do it. Don't ask me, it's just the way it was - ok.

Considering the career I've had, This next bit still makes me shake my head. Talk about dodging bullets! I went to the Benalla Loco depot and met Bob Burns the Senior Clerk, who got me to fill out an application for the position of Trainee Driver. Maybe it was still called a 'Fireman' then, I can't remember. The next step was an interview and a medical examination.

The interview with Roy Oldaker was going well. (I had been honest about having had previous employment) when there was a knock on his office door. Some junior guy had my old file in his hand, apologised to Roy for taking so long to find it, (damned Traffic Branch filing systems) and wanted to talk to Roy. Roy asked him what was up, and he said he needed to speak to him in private, outside the office. Roy came back in, waving my file and went on to dress me down telling me that if he'd been aware of this stuff, there was NO WAY I'd have been bought down from Benalla, or that he would have wasted his time on interviewing me. He must have been having a good day though, because after the dust settled, and his blood pressure returned to normal, he asked me a bit about my current personal situation and gave me the good old 'One final chance' lecture.

I got a really strong sermon about the responsibilities of the loco grade and was told to get out and get a medical.

Next problem, I foresaw (good pun?) was the damn eyesight. I was slightly short sighted, but not too bad. I had heard that once you were on the footplate you could arrange to get glasses, but that you weren't taken on if you actually needed them at the time of the medical. I was told later it was a throwback to the old steam days, where glasses would fog up badly in the cold air.

I entered the railway docs office, and the gods were with me. Part way through the routine check up, he got a call and had to leave the room. (Maybe it was Roy, I dunno). I was up in an instant, checking both sides of the eye chart (nothing had changed since 72), did my best to memorise the two bottom lines in the few seconds I had and sat back down. The doctor came back in, was chatting away asking me stuff, and I'm muttering V H G Y etc under my breath trying to remember the bottom lines of both sides of the chart. Suddenly the dreadful deal was done, and I was once again back on board, except this time it was the Rolling Stock Branch....lets go.PS. I got some glasses too.

There was still no iron clad guarantee that I could have a position back at Benalla, but the odds looked good, so I crashed at one of the original Toorak mates places again, and in Jan 1980 commenced initial classes at Sth Dynon. Good times. Learn 'The Red Book'. Some basic brake information. Get your head around the types and kinds of signals. A few weeks of washing/cleaning locos.. All done, then back to Seymour with an instructor driver (Joe Angeli) for 25 or so trips, and I found myself back in Benalla with

a new, interesting and enjoyable job. There are dozens of great stories of those times, but I'm trying to keep this as a simple timeline of my journey, mainly to demonstrate the variety of jobs I was fortunate enough to experience along the line.

At Benalla we ran between Albury and Melb on both gauges, the Yarrawonga /Oaklands branch, the Wahgunyah, the Myrtleford and Bright lines. Even a couple to Peechelba. A depot of colourful characters. Referred to as the 'Benalla Bobbalongs' by the Wodonga crews that flashed by on the Daylight, the Spirit and Aurora on their mini gauge.

Eventually the good times came to an end in Benalla and after qualifying as a Driver I was subjected to the compulsory transfer to 'The Sparks'. Someone will know better than I what years all this took place, I think it was about '84.

Having lived in Melb (Cheltenham) as a kid I knew my way round a bit, and figured that if I bought a house out near 'The Hills' that I'd soon pick up a bit of work (even as a junior driver) at the Ringwood, Upper Gully, Belgrave or Lilydale depots and save the commute to Flinders St each day. Worked out well. There was always some local driver off sick at short notice.

About two years on the sparks and I spot another career move!! There was an advertisement in the Weekly Notice for an 'Operations Management Training Scheme'. An 18 month training program. At this time The Victorian Railways, V/Line, Vic Rail or whatever they were calling themselves at the time were running headlong into some massive changes. They had pulled in some Pommy consultants,

A FEW MORE PARTING WORDS

from memory the names were Laurie Searle and Peter Paye, who, amongst a myriad other changes, had suggested that they select a handful of internal employees, (can you believe that!) from any grade at all, and train them up as future managers. I got a gig!

A really interesting time followed, despite the fact it was a hefty pay cut from being on the footplate. Bad timing too, with a new house and kids starting school. But it was Mon to Fri so I got to spend the weekends of those years with my kids.

During the 18 months of training we were expected to spend a month or so in every different department of the rail industry. All the Operations areas of course, Signalling and Communication, Infrastructure, Finance, Way and Works, Workshops even the Overhead Division of the metro network got a look in. We had to get all Safeworking briefs on all systems, plus Station Officers and Station Masters certificates.

So the training course finished, now all I needed was an actual job! During the training period I had spent some time with one Gary Merrigan (Traction and Train Crew Manager). As I was one of only two of the 6 trainees with loco experience, he offered me an interim position. Unfortunately as a further recommendation from the Poms, Gary had just been handed the responsibility for closing numerous country loco depots. One of those at the top of the list wasBenalla...shit!

They were bad times. Unpleasant times. Good people who's jobs were being pulled out from under them all over Victoria. I could see why it was happening, I just didn't enjoy being part of the process.

The Poms had also recommended a few other projects be set up, and these had been running for a few years now. The Driver Training Project and the Driver Only Project, to name a couple. The Driver Training Project was finally nearing completion. Well, maybe it wasn't fully completed, and in my opinion it never was (the simulators and loggers never really got across the line, they were never completed to the standard that the original specs had outlined) but I think enough money had been thrown at it, and at a Ministry level there was pressure for implementation and start up. Besides that, the old training programs had been abolished and the entire PTC, both MET and V/Line was going to run out of train drivers. FAST.

I got the job as the first Manager of the new Driver Training Centre at South Dynon and I wish to thank all of the guys who jumped on board with me as SCIDs, Classroom Instructors and OJTs. That was a massive effort at the time, and we pulled it off. Can't thank you all enough. It was my first solo effort in the drivers' seat as a manager. A lot of detractors, a lot of resistance to change and traditions, and a lot of people doing their fair share of back stabbing. But it worked. We had both V/Line and Metro all under the same integrated program. We kicked goals.

After all that hard work by so many people I now feel disillusioned by the current situation. I was going to exclude Metro, as their trainees do still seem to become qualified drivers following a structured process, but after the arrogant, insulting, personal comment I once got from a blow-in manager of theirs, I guess they'll eventually manage to finish up a basket-cases like the rest. This guy was so impressed with himself. He was going to sort out this ridiculously

simple driver training problem ... and – he was gone within about two weeks of that conversation.

Private companies, with incompetents at the helm from outside the industry, have dismantled all the work that a team with hundreds of years of combined experience developed and successfully implemented. Becoming a driver these days (in parts of the industry) seems to be an ad hoc hit and miss process far, far worse than it ever was way back before so much was invested in that 1980's Driver Training Project. But I digress....get back on track. This is supposed to be a bit of a run down about my weird career.

So the other project I mentioned, the V/Line Driver Only Project, had got to the stage where crew training in all of the changes that were to take place re one person operation had become imperative. So they offered me, the Driver Training Manager, a new job. Less stress and a bit of a pay increase to knock it into shape. So back to Transport House for me and a new job involving a slightly different set of skills. See, I had a budget of a few million bucks this time to buy favour with the driving grade and the Loco Division. What needs fixing here besides training? Loco mods? Yep. Signal and infrastructure upgrades / alterations? Yep. Are there any communication issues while on the network? Hahaha. Let's not forget a drivers pay increase either.

I did have one thing in my favour here. Everyone knew these new things called 'Sprinters' were not far off the horizon, and they would certainly be one person operation. There was a reasonably positive attitude from the Loco Division and again we worked well (Marc might beg to differ) and got

AT THE END OF THE LINE.

Cont. By John Atkinson- Retired Driver

a hell of a lot done. We did get a pretty good bang for our buck for the drivers. And as we all know, Driver Only is now well and truly settled in as the norm at Pass.

I'll have to leave it there regarding current Driver Only Operation talks. It did raise its head again a few years ago at PN. I just got so frustrated and annoyed with attitudes of the new kids (managers) on the block.

So the projects wound up, as they are wont to do. I'd have to take on something else. It had now been about ten years since I was on the footplate as a driver, and privatisation of all aspects of the rail industry was hitting at full pace. At Transport House it was a bit like the scramble for lifeboats on the Titanic. I didn't need this crap. This management environment was turning toxic.

A chance coffee with Peter Schwind from Metro and I got wind of the fact that there were to be a number of

positions vacant at Ringwood in the near future, but he'd need a response from me within a week if I wanted to go back to 'The Hills' as a driver. Ten mins from home, good job, good pay. I was qualified and I was back to the occupation I previously enjoyed. I'd given the industry ten years of effort, seen a heap of hard work come to fruition, only to all be gradually dismantled by the vicious privatisation machine. What a fuckin waste of my time!!

I was back into train driving and it was like a duck to water for me. Good years followed, great mates. Wednesday 'Stress Management' arvos with Agro, Jacko, Kersh, Chrome and the rest of the Hills crew. It had been a 10 year management experience that I don't regret, but was damn good to turn my back on it all.

Some personal issues saw me 'retire' with full benefits from the sparks sometime after I'd made 55 years old.

But a comeback was inevitable. You don't get rid of me that easily. With one of my sons Peter, we took on running the Iluka sand train. Based in Portland, we lived in a house 50 metres from the surf at Cape Bridgewater. We traversed western Victoria together till the Iluka contract wound up. Probably the most enjoyable time I ever had on the job. Anywhere.

Peter finished up driving at Metro, and I saw out my last driving days at PN Bulk at Geelong. Guess what??? Often running the Yarrawonga and Oaklands services. Exactly where I started 42 years ago.

Hundreds of stories have popped into mind as I wrote this. Meet me for a beer, or a quiet glass of red and a whole lotta laughs...you know who you are.

Cheers,
- John Atkinson

HAPPY RETIREMENT

ENJOY YOUR PERMANANT WEEKEND

"Retirement is not the end of the road, but the beginning of a highway"

Congratulations to all of our members who have retired in the past year and a half. On behalf of the Team at the Locomotive Division, we would sincerely like to thank and acknowledge all of these incredible people for all their hard work, dedication and contributions over the years. Happy Retirement!

Theo Rowleson - Jan 2022
Brian Jones - Jan 2022
Warren Banfield - Jan 2022
Luigi Perna - Feb 2022
John Atkinson - Feb 2022
Geoff Tampion - Feb 2022
Mark Morse - Mar 2022
Robert Aqualina - Apr 2022
William Da Alwis - May 2022
Richard Ackland - Jun 2022
Leon Baker - Jun 2022
Craig Findlay - Jul 2022
Paul Wilson - Jul 2022

Peter Morris - July 2022
Wade Kindred - Jul 2022
Chris Martin - Jul 2022
Colin Boldiston - Jul 2022
Peter Cochrane - July 2022
Peter Czajkowski - Aug 2022
Greg Crowe - Aug 2022
Rick Karkar - Aug 2022
Teddy Dron - Aug 2022
Michael Roylance - Aug 2022
Trevor Burge - Aug 2022
Peter Smith - Oct 2022
William Harvey - Nov 2022

Brian Fowler - Nov 2022
Gavin Artridge - Nov 2022
Brian Baldwinson - Dec 2022
James French - Jan 2023
Brett Johnstone - Jan 2023
Darren Clark - Feb 2023
Ian Hall - Feb 2023
Andrew Davies - Feb 2023
Charles Lindrea - Feb 2023
Paul Sanders - Apr 2023
Lincoln O'brien - April 2023
Gary Donovan - Apr 2023
Robert McKinlay - April 2023
Ronald Dawson May 2023

MESSAGES FROM

With some regret I have decided to retire a bit earlier than expected due to my hearing issues. My last shift at Seymour after 47 years service will be on 13/8/2022. Therefore I resign from the RTBU from that date.

I would like to wish the executive and members all the best for the future in these tough times. Thanks Everyone, I have enjoyed the ride.

- **Michael Roylance.**

Due to retirement I wish to resign from the rtbu loco division. Thanks for all your help over the years all the best with the union.

- **William Harvey**

I wish to advise that I am retiring from Pacific National and the rail industry from Saturday 30th July, 2022.

I would like to thank the union for its support through my career and wish the best for its future endeavours.

Thanking you **Peter Strautmanis**



Above: After a long delay- Metro's Stephen Butler and Adam Francis were finally able to present **Wes Gordon** with his plaque in recognition of his work with the Locomotive Division. Wes retired in June 2020 at 76 years old.



Above: After a long wait, Adam Francis and Steve Curren were finally able to present **Peter Clary** with his Retirement Plaque. After 40 years in the industry, Peter retired on 16/10/2020. Peter was a HSR and a strong Unionist.

Please be advised that I have retired from the loco grade as of 26 Feb 22.

Thanks to all elected officials, past and present, for your efforts to ensure our workplace and conditions were protected, maintained or improved. Another chapter begins,

Cheers **John Atkinson**

After 42 years service I have decided to retire from metro trains. 22nd July 2022 will be my last day . I also wish to tender my resignation with RTBU Loco Division

From this date I wish the union all the best in there future endeavours.

Thanking you

Peter Cochrane

Metro train driver Lilydale

Hi Marc I have retired from today 09-12-2022 and wish advise of my resignation from the union from this date.

I would like to wish everyone all best for the future especially those at the freight companies. I would like to thank you and all the officers of loco division for their efforts over the years.

Regards **Brian Baldwinson**

With great happiness I am retiring after a long career as a train driver so I wish to resign from the union

Good luck for the future

- July 2022 **Peter Simos**

THE RETIREES

To rtbu loco division, as I'm retiring on the 24/2/2023 will be resigning from the loco division from that date.

Thanks to everyone in the union for all your hard work for the members and wish you well for

Your future dealings with management.

-Ian Hall

Due to retirement from permanent work from Pacific national I would like to resign from RTBU Loco division as from 22/04/2023

Thank you to All union delegates at Dimboola Intermodal depot for your service and good luck for the future

-Paul Sanders

I wish to inform the RTBU that I have retired and wish to thank everyone past and present for there support over my 42.5 years .

Dec 2022

-Gavin Artridge



As I have retired from Metro trains I hereby resign from the Rtbu effective immediately.

Thank you for your support over the years and good luck for the future.

-Brian Fowler

Above: We see Ian Van Aerle aka "Squiggle" on his last day at Metro Trains.

Ian has been employed on the railways for 39 years, commencing as a shunter.

He moved onto Goods Guard, Second Person, Loco Driver before becoming a Sparks Driver in February 1991.

Ian started his long service leave on the road to his upcoming retirement.

We wish Ian all the best.

Hi All just a quick email to inform you that I will be retiring today 14/04/23, I would like to thank you all for your help and hard work over the years keep it up many thanks

-Robert McKinlay

I would like to resign from the RTBU as from the 30/01/2023 and also like to thank all the union officials passed and present for there help over the past 40 years

Cheers, Johnno

-Brett Johnstone



A TRIBUTE TO

Ross *Bramwell*

27/11/1954 – 30/12/2022

In late 2022 we lost one of our very own. A dedicated unionist; a kind hearted and caring human being. Those of us who have been fortunate enough to know and work with Ross have lost a dear friend and an inspiring individual. Ross will always be remembered and his spirit will forever live on here at the Locomotive Division.