



RTBU Express

MEMBER BULLETIN OF THE RTBU NSW BRANCH

Commemorating the 1917 Great Strike



Photo: Eveleigh Stories

Message from the Secretary

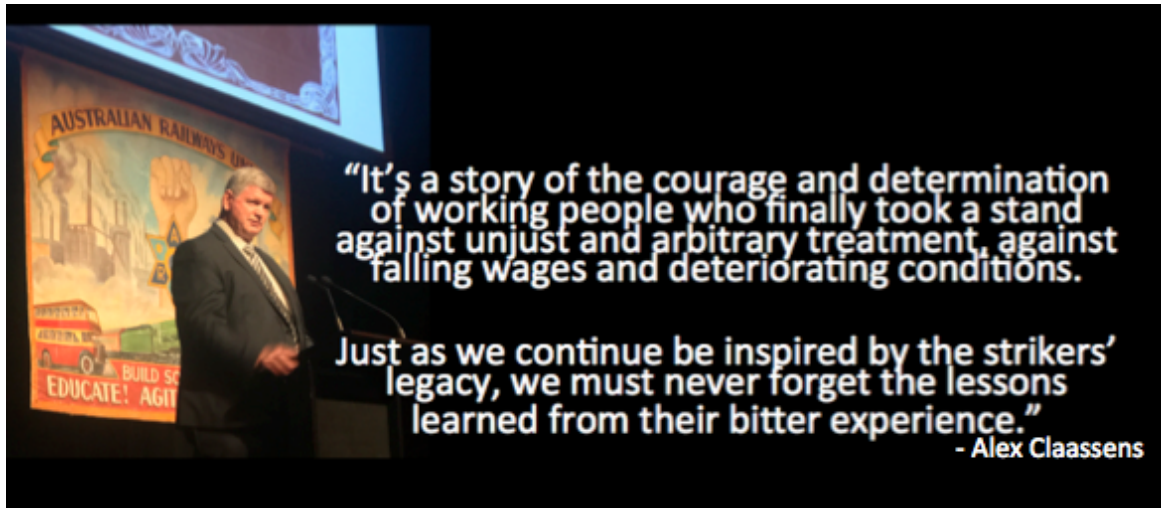
Welcome to this special edition of the RTBU Express, a commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of The Great Strike. It was one of the largest industrial actions Australia has ever seen, and began when rail and tramway workers in Eveleigh and Randwick downed tools against new working conditions. Today, our unions carry the torch for the brave men and women who went on strike in 1917.

Close to 100,000 workers went on strike for 6 weeks, cultivating the protest and support of over 200,000 Australians.

Over one third of union members in NSW - 14% of the total workforce in NSW - took part, as well as thousands of workers in Victoria and Queensland. The retribution of governments and employers against those unions and their members was calculated and severe.

The 1917 Great Strike is a moment in history that we should continue to reflect on and learn from.





A message from Sally McManus



"The Government of the day, the ruling class and the press they owned tried to destroy us. But despite owning the media that attacked and vilified the unions, despite all the forces available to the state being mobilised against them, despite the blacklisting of the lilywhite strikers, despite the deregistering of so many unions – they did not crush or destroy us.

They made us stronger.

They wanted to punish a generation of unionists so severely we would want to forget this strike. Yet 100 years on, we are here today, five generations on celebrating it."

-Excerpt from Centenary Dinner, 1917 Great Strike, August 2, 2017.

Ben Chifley



Chifley was the youngest locomotive driver in the NSW Railways and went on to become Australia's 16th Prime Minister.

During his lifetime Chifley referred to the Strike as a pivotal moment in Australian history, for him personally and for Australian workers.

“All that that harsh and oppressive treatment did...was to transform me...from an ordinary engine driver into the Prime Minister of this country”



DATE	MONTH	YEAR	POSITION	STATION	BRANCH	RATE OF PAY
31	May	16	Inspected	Wentworth	Stones	5/0
31	May	1917				5/0
22	Apr	1917	Employed to			
24	Apr	1917	Shop Boy	Wentworth	Loco	5/0
24	Apr	1917	Dismissed by Proclamation	Wentworth	Loco	5/0
24	Apr	1917	Shop Boy	Wentworth	Loco	5/0
23	Apr	1917	Assigned			
22	Apr	1917	Labourer	Wentworth	Loco	5/0
22	Apr	1917				
22	Apr	1917				
11	Nov	28	Chairman	Wentworth	Loco	5/0
25	Nov	29	Labourer	Wentworth	Loco	5/0
10	Apr	30				
10	Apr	30	Assigned			

Seeking Justice for Merv



Merv Flanagan, a member of the Trolley Draymen and Carter's Union, was shot and killed by a scab on Pyrmont Bridge Road on the 30th August. The justice system failed to deliver justice for Merv. The Coroner's Court dismissed the charge against the scab whoshot and killed Merv, instead, jailing his brother and a mate for two months.

Merv's death left a young widow and a large family without the support of their breadwinner. Although Merv was not the first worker to be killed in the course of a strike, nor the last, he remains especially

remembered as a victim of the 1917 Great Strike. Please help us in our appeal to give Merv a headstone and memorial that he deserves [by donating here](#).

How you can get involved

As this is an ongoing centenary commemoration, there are still ways you can become involved in our honouring of the thousands of workers who took action and paved the way for future generations to come.

- You can visit the **Sydney Carriageworks exhibition** that is open every day **until August 27** and free to the public. Check out the exhibition details [here](#). *Photo: Sydney Carriageworks Exhibition, Zac Wimberly.*
- Come along to the Goulburn Centenary Dinner on **Saturday August 26** at Goulburn Workers Club. Tickets are \$75 and can be purchased through **Goulburn Workers Club**.
- Join us at the **Light on the Hill** annual dinner hosted by NSW Labor, which will include paying a special tribute to the 1917 Great Strike. The dinner will be held in Bathurst on **Saturday September 23rd**. [Grab your tickets here](#).





- Also in memory of the 1917 Great Strike, a special train will be going to Bathurst for the Light on the Hill dinner. **You can find out more information and buy your ticket here.**
- **Donate to the Merv Flanagan Appeal.** We're raising funds to help give Merv the headstone and memorial he deserves. **Donate via this link.**
- Share the **RTBU Express article link** on Facebook with your friends.

Are your postal details up to date?

Have you moved house, changed employer or changed jobs recently?

Please email the union at NSWHO@rtbu-nsw.asn.au or **download the change of details form here.**

If you know any members who have not provided their personal email address to the Union please encourage them to update their details as this newsletter is no longer sent to Railcorp, STA or other company addresses.