



RTBU EXPRESS

April Newsletter



Secretary's message

Dear members,

It's been another busy month at the RTBU with some important developments happening across our divisions.

During our ARTC depot tour in February, it was made clear that RTBU members around the state are ready to ramp up the fight for a fair and reasonable enterprise agreement. So we've applied for another protected action ballot at ARTC infrastructure.

At Sydney & NSW Trains, once again our arguments have been vindicated by leaked documents showing the NSW Government completely ignored expert advice and implemented the new timetable far too early.

The reports confirmed what we were saying on TV day after day in January; that the Government had no right to blame the workforce for the train delay nightmares, and that the workforce are at the mercy of management and the Government's incompetent decision-making.

The Bus & Tram division have been busy adding to public pressure in Newcastle to force Keolis Downer to improve their inadequate bus timetable. After months of media blasts and public protests, Keolis have finally announced they will make changes to their timetable. But as you'll read about below, we're not celebrating yet, because any new bus timetable in Newcastle must be drafted in consultation with the

community and drivers, like it should have been in the first place.

Thank you to the members who joined us in Blacktown, Sydney CBD or Newcastle for the International Workers Day ceremony on Saturday. Don't forget the May Day rally coming up in Sydney on Sunday May 6th and in Wollongong on Saturday May 5th.

You can check out some of the photos from Newcastle's May Day rally on page four.

In Solidarity,
Alex Claassens
RTBU NSW Secretary

International Workers Memorial Day – Newcastle, Sydney & Blacktown Service

The RTBU attended memorial services in Blacktown, Sydney CBD and Newcastle at the end of April for Workers to mourn workers who have been injured or killed at work.



“Remember the Dead. Fight like hell for the Living”



Retired driver speaks up about railway tragedies

Trigger warning: death and suicide. If you need support, please call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

Mick White, a retired driver and RTBU Locomotive Division member from the Blue Mountains, featured on SBS's Insight program in April to speak about the horrific realities of deaths on our railways.

On behalf of the NSW RTBU Locomotive Division and all train drivers near and far, we'd like to thank Mick for telling his story, as it has placed a spotlight on the experiences of train drivers that is all too common.

Because of media censorship laws preventing media reports on suicide, we rarely hear about these terrible incidents on our railways and the impact this has on drivers and all involved.

In his 30 year career as a train driver, Mick has been witness to 3 deaths, and 20 near misses.

Unfortunately and unsurprisingly, this left Mick

Panel unanimous in changes needed for regional transport: Politics in the Pub

In April, RTBU NSW Secretary Alex Claassens addressed Goulburn's Politics in the Pub for an important discussion about desperately needed changes for regional transport. Mr Claassens told the crowd *"The first regional trains are anticipated by the Government to be on the tracks in the early 2020's, but if the lightrail disaster is anything to go by, who knows when regional communities will actually get access to these vital services. We could be waiting another five years, or another ten. Just like they've bungled the light rail to a state where it's way behind schedule and over budget, with this Government, you can always expect them to fall short of what they put on paper."*

"The commuters in regional NSW deserve more action that just a 40 year visionary plan, they need more train and bus services and they need it now." Mr Claassens said. [Read the story in the Goulburn Post on RTBU Express.](#)

April 19 Media Release: Sydney timetable revelations appalling, workers

Did you hear Alex Claassens, RTBU NSW Secretary on radio in April? He spoke to stations across Sydney including ABC Sydney, 2GB, WSFM, Nova and Triple M about this Government's complete incompetence. Read what Mr Claassens said in our media release below.

Revelations that transport officials knew the new timetable was destined to be a disaster before it was introduced shows how little respect the Transport Minister and the NSW Government has for the travelling public, rail workers say.

Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) NSW Secretary, Alex Claassens, said this report highlights that the NSW Government is shrouding our transport projects in secrecy from the public, and it's commuters who are wearing the cost for this Government's incompetence.

"These reports show that they knew the timetable was destined to fail. Why then push ahead and introduce it?" Mr Claassens said.

"It doesn't surprise me that this report was floating around. Anyone with any insight into how the system works at all



Retired driver speaks up... cont'd



Saber Baluch, SBS Insight

with severe Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

PTSD manifests itself in many different ways, depression, addiction, isolation and other mental challenges.

Your Union is here to support you in these circumstances, and we'd like to take this opportunity to remind all members to call us on 9264 2511 for assistance.

In case you missed it, you can watch the program on [SBS Insight here](#)

For anyone having a tough time, please call Lifeline on 13 11 14, for someone to talk to.

April 19 Media Release cont'd

could tell you that it was destined to fail.

"The government didn't consult with the workers – the people who know about how the systems work. Had that happened, maybe we wouldn't have ended up in this mess."

[Read the full media release on RTBU Express.](#)

Media Release: Finally. New Newcastle bus timetable long overdue

In April it was announced that Keolis Downer plans to make amendments to their timetable after enormous public pressure and outcry from community groups and the RTBU. Dave Woollams, RTBU NSW Bus & Tram Division President spoke on every Newcastle radio station that morning to make sure our voice was loud and clear: any new bus timetable in Newcastle must be drafted in consultation with the community and drivers.

Read our media release below. Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) Tram and Bus Division President, Dave Woollams, said that news today that Keolis Downer will change its problem-ridden timetable is very welcomed, albeit it long overdue.

However, the RTBU warned that the company would end up in a similar predicament unless it committed to properly consulting with the community and workers on the timetable changes.

"It's great to see the company has finally listened to the concerns of workers and commuters and taken action, but we're not going to get too excited until we see the details of the changes," Mr Woollams said.

"The bus service in Newcastle has been nothing short of shambolic since Transport Minister, Andrew Constance, hastily sold our bus service off to the private sector."

[Read the full Media Release on RTBU Express.](#)



RTBU member win sets state-wide precedent

May Day 2018

The RTBU NSW will be attending this year's May Day event in full force, and we want as many members to come along and join us in Sydney on Sunday, May 6th at 11am, or Saturday May 5th at 10am in Wollongong. May Day is an annual day of action to celebrate the achievement of our union movement and workers' rights across the world.

100 FREE RTBU MAY DAY SHIRTS

Want a RTBU NSW May Day 2018 t-shirt? Be one of the first 100 to RSVP to the rally and you'll get a shirt. RSVP by emailing nswwho@rtbu-nsw.asn.au so you can get your shirt. Get in quick!

If you don't get involved in union events much – May Day is the ONE day this year you should join in and get involved. Don't miss out on this national day of action.

You can [check out the Facebook event here](#). Thanks to all members who came along to the Newcastle May Day rally over the weekend. We look forward to seeing Sydney and Wollongong members next weekend.

In an excellent win not just for our member, but for workers across NSW, the Workers Compensation Commission has made a landmark decision to grant compensation for retired railway worker Sam Baldacchino for an injury incurred over a decade ago.

RTBU NSW Locomotive Division Secretary, Bob Hayden explains, *"when first Sam told us about his injury, we knew that he would need a strong legal team to fight for him so that he could get the compensation he deserved."*

In 1999, Sam sustained serious damage to his knee as a shunter driver. He was later left with no choice but to undergo an expensive knee replacement and intensive rehabilitation. Our legal team at Carrol & O'Dea lawyers worked with Sam to compile a strong case for compensation, despite 2012 legislation changes that made it even harder for Sam to win.

"In a landmark decision, Sam has won compensation for his knee replacement, creating an incredible precedent for workers across the state."

"Essentially, what this means is that members can now apply for compensation for replacement surgeries due to injuries that happened even decades earlier. This is particularly important for our retired members."

"This is another fantastic win not just for Sam and the Locomotive Division, but to all workers in NSW, retired and active." Mr Hayden said.

You can read the Carrol & O'Dea lawyers media release, the Commission's decision papers and a Newcastle Herald story about the win on RTBU Express.



May Day celebrations



A 2018 May Day t-shirt