



RTBU

THE FORK IN THE ROAD

Policy Priorities for the 2019 Federal Election

Australia has come to a fork in the road. Our cities are clogged, but our regions are struggling. The cost of living is going up, but wages are not. Corporations are becoming more powerful, and more belligerent, while the rights of workers are being eroded. Wealth is becoming increasingly concentrated in the hands of the privileged few. And our physical environment is reaching crisis point, with escalating climate change posing an existential threat to the planet.

This Federal election is, therefore, about much more than just which party will govern Australia for the next three years. This election is about the direction of the country, and whether or not Australia can be steered toward a fairer, more prosperous and more sustainable future. It is arguably the most critical election in Australia's political history.

The RTBU has identified 13 broad policy priorities for the major political parties. As a democratic, member-based and member-run organisation, our policy positions are truly driven from the ground up by working people. Most importantly, these policy priorities provide a signpost towards a better Australia.

The fork in the road, therefore, should not be confusing – all our political parties need to do is consult the map, and the way forward is clear.

KEEPING OUR RAILWAYS SAFE

The RTBU calls on parties to commit to implementing a prescriptive approach to rail safety, including mandated minimum shift breaks and maximum shift lengths, in order to protect workers from the risks of fatigue. The RTBU calls on parties to retain the current definition of “rail safety work” to ensure rail workers get the training they need to keep themselves and the travelling public as safe as possible.

THE RIGHT TO STRIKE

The RTBU believes that far-reaching restrictions and hurdles imposed by the Fair Work Commission on taking legitimate industrial action, including those in the Sydney Trains dispute, must immediately be reviewed and overturned by regulators. The RTBU calls on parties to commit to genuine measures that protect and respect workers' right to strike. .

RESTORING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE CORPORATE SECTOR

The RTBU calls on parties to develop and implement measures that will give meaning to the notion of the ‘social licence’ by making corporate social responsibilities legally binding. These measures should include:

- expanding duties owed by corporate directors to the community;
- introducing public interest audits and mandatory reporting; and
- establishing a body to drive cultural change in Australia's corporate boardrooms and propose legislation relating to corporate social responsibilities.

URBAN RAIL AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

The RTBU calls on parties to develop a \$20 billion national fund to support urban public transport infrastructure projects, managed by Infrastructure Australia, and supported by a policy framework that facilitates the use of alternative funding methods such as value capture.

POPULATION, DECENTRALISATION AND REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The RTBU calls on parties to abandon anti-migrant and anti-growth rhetoric, and to develop comprehensive strategies for economic decentralisation and to encourage growth in major regional centres. Furthermore, the RTBU calls for the establishment of a \$50 billion Population and Infrastructure fund to build better transport connections between urban and regional population centres, including high speed rail links.

COUNTRY RAIL RENEWAL

The RTBU calls for a dedicated Federal Government infrastructure investment program targeted at the revitalisation of regional rail corridors to protect the viability of regional economies and support road safety.

PROTECTING AND CREATING HIGH-SKILLED TRANSPORT JOBS

The RTBU calls for a tripartite strategy overseen by government, union and employer representatives to:

- Model current and future employment trends and capabilities in the rail industry;
- Map current and emerging tasks, skills and capabilities in the industry;
- Develop upskilling and enhanced career pathways and retraining programs for workers to ensure they have the skills to perform the jobs of the future;
- Facilitate long-term and multi-site planning of the introduction of technological change across the industry;
- Develop and manage rail industry standards, rules, codes of practice and guidelines; and
- Develop strategies for long-term collaboration across the industry, especially between unions, employer associations, training organisations and governments.

INLAND RAIL

The RTBU calls for the work on the Inland Rail project to be expedited as a matter of urgency, with a clear timeline for construction and priority given to economically important sections, including Toowoomba to the Port of Brisbane.

SINGLE NATIONAL RAIL ACCESS REGIME

The RTBU calls for regulatory control over access to all Australian rail networks to be transferred to the Federal Government, under auspices of the ACCC, and a single national access regime to be put in place across the country.

TRUTH IN BARGAINING

The RTBU calls on parties to commit to 'Truth in Bargaining' laws, by amending the Fair Work Act to mandate employer disclosure of comprehensive internal accounts, budgets and forecasts as part of the bargaining process.

TRANSPORT AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

The RTBU calls for the development of a comprehensive national strategy to reduce transport-related greenhouse gas emissions, including:

- Increasing funding for passenger rail, tram and bus networks, as well as more efficient multi-modal freight infrastructure and services;
- Investment in behaviour change programs to encourage modal shift to mass transit systems;
- Developing transport industry emission reduction targets;
- Including public transport projects as part of any green jobs programs;
- Implementing greenhouse gas emission standards for cars and heavy vehicles.

BUILDING CODE

The RTBU calls on parties to commit to re-writing the Building Code in consultation with trade unions to ensure that it supports safe, secure and well-paid jobs for Australians.

ENDING THE LEGAL ARMS RACE

The RTBU calls for the independent industrial relations umpire, the Fair Work Commission, to provide a more collaborative and cooperative environment for the resolution of workplace disputes. The Fair Work Commission should operate on a more even playing field by removing the right for lawyers to request leave to appear in hearings unless there is consent from all attending parties.

To see the RTBU full policy blueprint go to: www.rtbu.org.au/the_fork_in_the_road_rtbu_2019_federal_election_priorities