



Metro Trains Sydney - UPDATE

Coronavirus

The impact of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) on our community is growing at an alarming rate. As public transport workers, we are very exposed to the effects of the virus.

It has become apparent that the containment of coronavirus has failed. It must be remembered that this is effectively a new strain of flu, and as transport workers we all know how impossible it is to stop that from spreading. We do however know what we can personally do to minimise catching the flu and the same measures apply:

- Wash your hands regularly. Wash your hands properly. Hand washing instructions are in all workplaces and are contained in the graphic below.
- If you are unable to wash your hands then use hand sanitiser. All workplaces are providing extra sanitiser to employees.
- Do not touch your face when you have dirty hands. This is crucial.
- Cough and sneeze into the crook of your elbow to stop the spread of droplets. This is the main way in which the virus spreads.
- If you wish to wear a mask you are entitled to do so.

In relation to masks, it is current NSW Government policy that only medical professionals are able to access surgical masks. Regardless of this policy any member who wants to wear a mask that they purchase for work is entitled to do so.

In the meantime, remember that you have an absolute right to cease unsafe work if you reasonably believe that your safety is at serious risk. This includes potential infection by the Coronavirus. If you do cease work, you have to immediately inform your supervisor and make yourself available for alternative duties.

If you are infected by coronavirus and are forced into isolation or are otherwise unable to work, there may be special leave entitlements that you are entitled too (rather than just personal/sick leave). If you are unsure, please contact your organiser. We do not believe that members should be forced to use their leave entitlements unduly.

Given the nature of our industry it is inevitable that our members face a higher risk to this pandemic. The RTBU has called on all employers in our industries (including Metro Trains) to put in place special measures to keep all staff safe at work. We will let members know if Metro responds to this call. We are calling on Metro to do the right thing and consult with all staff about what their intentions are to minimise the risk of the coronavirus for its staff.

For more information, Transport has and will continually update its frequently asked questions. You can access the FAQs at:

https://www.stayinformed.com.au/novel-coronavirus-status-update/news_feed/coronavirus-qa

OR

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/alerts/Pages/coronavirus-faqs.aspx>

Remember the RTBU is here to help if the Coronavirus affects you at work.

Operational Agreement

Recently the RTBU appeared at the Fair Work Commission where both parties made their arguments in relation to whether MTS operational employees wished to bargain for a new Agreement. Unfortunately the Commission was not satisfied that MTS employees wanted to bargain for a new agreement.

Despite this legal technicality, we know MTS employees still want, and frankly deserve, to have an agreement that provides proper protections and conditions at work. In saying this, together we can still prove to the Commission that all operational employees want to bargain for a better and fairer agreement.

The RTBU will be emailing **EVERY** operational employee on the coming weeks asking them directly whether or not they want to bargain for a new agreement. If you want a new agreement simply reply **YES**.

If a majority of employees reply with “yes”, this will be enough to prove to the Commission that members want to bargain. Remember that MTS management cannot take any adverse or disciplinary action if you reply YES.

If any action is taken against members we will take any necessary action to protect our members. We urge all members to respond and stand together in order to bargain for a new agreement.

Federal Court case result

Together the union and members have achieved a good result from our recent Federal Court proceedings. Many members have been frustrated with the lack of respect and dignity MTS have shown us.

Recently we reached an agreement that recognises union members and their delegates’ rights in the workplace. In this agreement we secured the following:

1. MTS recognises the RTBU as a union representative to MTS employees.
2. Induction rights to any new employees.
3. Recognises union delegates, and will allow union delegates to perform their duties without discrimination or interference.
4. Consultative Committee every 4 months in order to resolve issues in the workplace
5. Release of up to 5 Union delegates for 5 days per annum to attend union training.

This agreement now legally binds MTS to recognise the RTBU, its delegates, and members’ right to be represented without fear of reprisal. The RTBU have written to MTS demanding a meeting to discuss how the points above and when the Consultative Committee will begin in order to table and resolve members’ ongoing issues – (e.g. Rostering, Uniform, Travelling, and Safety concerns).

The RTBU will also be in touch in regards to conducting official delegate elections.

If you have any concerns about the above, please contact your organiser or call or email the office on (02) 9264 2511 or nswwho@rtbu-nsw.asn.au.

Issued by:
Trent Hunter
Organiser

Authorised by:
Alex Claassens
Branch Secretary