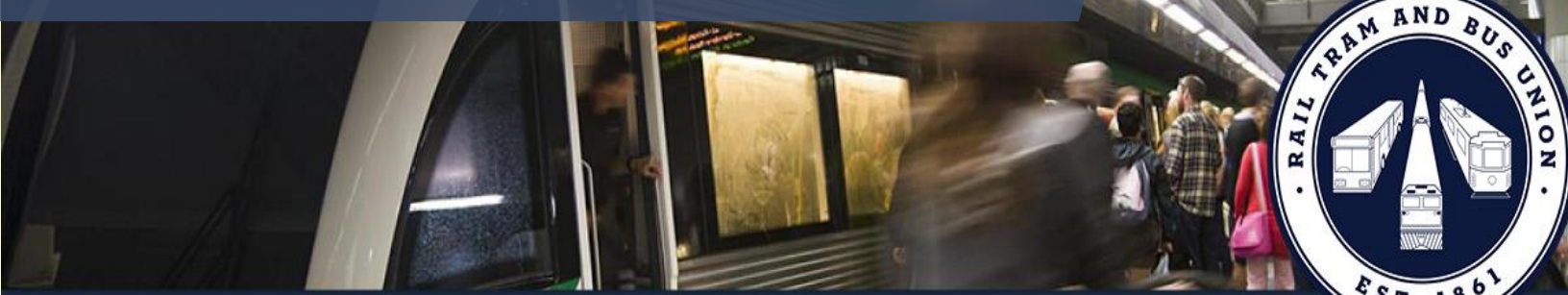


# Membership Newsletter

May 2021  
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## RTBU WA PTA BRANCH UPDATE



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### Secretary's Address

I am sure we all welcome the Government's huge METRONET investment. Yet while the nine separate METRONET projects, including the much-anticipated Morley-Ellenbrook line, is great news for West Australians, I have concern about how they plan to staff the expansion.

It is all very well to say we are going to open this or that line this year or early next, but who are they manning them with? For example, the Forrestfield-Airport Link will require about 50 Transit Officers, but transit staffing levels are already stretched.

The system is growing faster than employers can recruit, and retention is a concern in areas such as Transit Officers and infrastructure workers. I want to see the McGowan government commit, like they have with nurses and police, to bolster these areas of concern. Importantly, I want to see all workers in the rail (and coach) industry employed as state employees, not as labour-hire contractors.

Infrastructure labour hire for example is bleeding the taxpayer's pockets dry. This government needs to invest in the state's directly employed infrastructure workers, and bring protection officers back in-house, all of which will save money and increase safety.

As members you are doing a terrific job on the frontline, but we need to ensure that your employer continues to attract and retain more people like you into the rail (and coach) industry, in turn, creating more secure jobs for Western Australians, and a more secure West Australian economy.

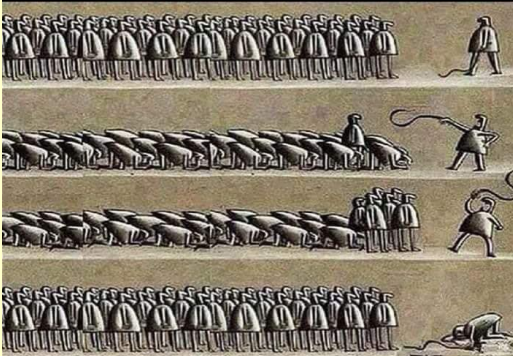
In Solidarity!

### A Quote with Relevance

*"A bad boss can take a good staff and destroy it, causing the best employees to flee and the remainder to lose all motivation."* – Brigette Hyacinth

### Union Meme!

IF ONLY PEOPLE UNDERSTOOD  
THEIR TRUE POWER



WAS IN UNITY

## Out on Track



Below are just some of the recent and current issues/matters dealt with by our Union:

- Attended numerous Public Sector Union Alliance meetings to strategise a collective 2022 plan to break State Wages Policy.
- Provide feedback and input on the new multimillion dollar PTA rostering system (WMS) soon to replace RAPS
- Supported numerous members through discipline investigations, including drafting responses to allegations, attending interviews, and viewing CCTV of incidents.
- Drafting feedback and input on the new TransWA Agreement (recently ratified) and potential TTO Railcar Driver Agreement (currently out to vote).
- Attended numerous meetings with managers from several employer groups (PTA, EDI, Spotless and Delron etc) to discuss and address a variety of workplace matters.
- Assisted members obtain 'COVID-19' leave/pay due to quarantine requirements and have their leave entitlements reccredited as a result.
- Met with Bresland Insurance Brokers to pursue and ensure the best price on required insurances and membership benefits such as Journey Accident Insurance.
- Assisted a member facing criminal charges for a work-related incident by writing to the lead investigator to assist with ultimately no charge being laid.
- Conducted numerous site visits at stations, lines, and depots to meet with members.
- Negotiated the Terms of Reference for the Urban Railcar Driver Work Value Review and assisted in the creation of an accompanying FAQ.
- Wrote to TTO General Manger expressing concerns with the Transit Officer Retention Survey.
- Referred and managed members' interactions with industrial, family, criminal, and workers/criminal compensation lawyers.
- Provide information, input, and feedback on the new purpose-built National Membership Database set to replace our current membership database NationBuilder.
- Responded to emails, calls, and provided advice daily to countless members on a range of workplace topics and issues.
- Attended National Executive in Sydney NSW on behalf of the WA PTA Branch and the membership, representing WA at a National Level.

*“Assisted members obtain 'COVID-19' leave/pay due to quarantine requirements and have their leave entitlements reccredited as a result.”*

## THE POWER OF UNION



## Warm Up!

I don't know about you, but I am finding it is getting a little fresh! Our RTBU hoodies are well made, very warm, and the perfect garment to wear to and from work on a cold day. The hoodies are only \$60 each and range in sizes from S - 5XL.

Don't forget we also have some high quality RTBU polo shirts now. We have these polos in both ladies and men's sizes. The polos are only \$45 each. Ladies' sizes range from 10 - 16. Men's sizes from S - 5XL.

If you are interested, please contact our office on 9225 6722. Alternatively, you can email Robyn or Martine at [general@rtbuwa.asn.au](mailto:general@rtbuwa.asn.au).

Limited stock available as these garments have been flying off the shelves.



## Big Brother!

Our Union has been fighting back against a proposal from the Office of the National Rail Safety Regulator (ONRSR) to mandate the use of in-cab and visual recording devices in all Australian trains.

The proposal was presented to a meeting of federal, state and territory transport ministers on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May 2021. We are awaiting the outcome.

Our National Secretary Mark Diamond has expressed deep concern about the impacts of constant video surveillance on workers' mental health. A concern which has been echoed by many of our members.

To put it simply, the regulator's proposal is draconian and dangerous. It has been put forward under the guise of 'safety', but we are concerned that it will make the industry less safe.

The psychological impacts of constant audio and visual surveillance will likely lead to increased fatigue and anxiety for train drivers. Train cabins are workplaces, but they also serve as mobile meal rooms, change and spaces for private conversations.

The position is we are opposed to in-cab recording devices, however, as employers can legally force them on us, preparation to accept them under strict conditions may be required.

If the purpose of mandatory recording devices is to assist investigations into safety incidents, then that is all those recordings should be used for and therefore we have an opportunity through consultation with ONRSR to create strict limitations in any future legislation on the access and use of in-cab recordings for employers.

The concern, however, is that 'safety' has been used as a trojan horse for the introduction of a Big Brother-style surveillance system to monitor and discipline workers.

For ONRSR to implement the mandatory installation of cameras they require the State Government Ministers to accept the change to legislation that will allow this to occur. Know that we contacted all state and territory transport ministers with our concerns ahead of their meeting.

If the Ministers endorse ONRSR's proposal, it will still need to be legislated by each State and Territory Government. I have personally requested that our Minister of Transport, the Honourable Rita Saffioti, uses her veto to stop ONRSR from introducing this legislation.

Rail companies already have an extensive amount of data available (data Logger/Event recorders, Driver Advice Systems, radio voice recordings, and forward-facing camera) for investigation, compliance, and assessments. Adding surveillance inside the cabin of a train will not prevent an incident from happening. Better training, support, rosters, and a "no blame" culture will.

We believe that the extended use of in-cab recording devices will have little if any impact on the efficacy of rail safety investigations and will have a significant detrimental effect on the mental health of drivers.

No other Australian worker would accept this level of micro-surveillance of their daily tasks, let alone their personal time. Unfortunately, I have only recently learnt that many of our TransWA Road Coaches have had something similar imposed on them 5 years ago. I have commenced enquires of behalf of our Road Coach members as a result.

For more information and updates visit <https://www.rtbuwa.asn.au/news>



*“Allowing employers to play Big Brother is about control, not safety.”*



*“To put it simply, the regulator's proposal is draconian and dangerous”*



## Protecting Your Pay

Unfortunately, we still have several members approach our Union seeking assistance when they find themselves with a **non-work-related illness/injury** and unfortunately without the leave entitlements to ensure an income.

Whilst many of us automatically possess Salary Continuance Insurance (SCI) through our individual superannuation providers, the payments are often set to commence after lengthy default waiting periods of 90 days and provide a fraction of one's 'salary'.

An employer has no legal obligation to provide an employee alternative duties in these circumstances our ability to assist

## Reach Out!

Disciplinary investigations can be daunting. Having to attend any disciplinary meeting or respond to any allegation or enquiry will inevitably cause you considerable worry.

It could concern allegations about your conduct. Your performance. Or your amount of time off work because of illness. And it could result in a range of different disciplinary outcomes - including dismissal.

It is for this reason it is paramount that you reach out to the RTBU for advice and guidance from the get-go. Getting involved half way through an investigation can make things difficult down the track. Therefore, don't hesitate to reach out!

## No Shame

The COVID-19 pandemic is a stressful and uncertain time for all Australians. The pandemic appears to have only amplified the already existent pressures of life for many members and their families.

The RTBU wants to express there is no shame in seeking help if you need it. As an employee you have access to your employer's Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Employee assistance programs provide free, professional, and confidential external counselling services to assist you and your immediate family members through both personal and work-related problems, including:

- work pressure issues
- emotional stress, anxiety, conflict, tension, and depression
- separation, divorce, or relationship difficulties
- child and family issues
- personal trauma
- grief and bereavement
- health and lifestyle issues (including drugs & alcohol)
- financial and legal referral.

All EAP consultations are strictly confidential. Counsellors will not share information about you with anyone unless you authorise this in writing. Make mental health a priority!

becomes limited. In order to try and prevent these occurrences in the future, consideration to obtaining income protection through providers such as All Risk Protection Pty Ltd, who have specifically designed income protection options for rail industry employees, or speaking directly with your superannuation fund, should be given.

Of course, it is always recommended to seek independent financial advice before making or changing any arrangements regarding your finances.

For more information visit:

<http://www.allriskprotection.com.au/> or [www.rtbuwa.asn.au](http://www.rtbuwa.asn.au)



*Know your rights and seek assistance*



*If you do not know how or who to contact reach out and the RTBU will assist*

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