



THE ADVOCATE

JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRAM AND BUS UNION QUEENSLAND BRANCH

What are the new anti-union laws from the Morrison LNP Government really all about?



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Union Matriarch Josie Burke retires

News

Former Secretary of the Queensland Council of Unions (QCU) and United Voice, and champion of Queensland workers Ron Monaghan has passed away at age 65 after a long battle with cancer.

Ron—affectionally known as “Mono” by those who knew him—started in the labour movement in NSW in 1979. Ten years later, Ron moved to Queensland

to start work with the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union (The “Missos”—now United Voice).

There he worked tirelessly for improvements in wages, conditions, recognition and respect for members (particularly in the cleaning and brewing industries); his dedication and unwavering support of members saw his election as Branch Secretary in 1999.

Eight years later in 2007, Ron was elected General Secretary of the Queensland Council of Unions (QCU) as the *Your Rights At Work* campaign brought down John Howard’s Federal LNP Government. During his time as General Secretary of the QCU, he successfully transformed the QCU into a high-performing campaigning outfit that ensured workers’ issues gained the prominence they deserved—and weren’t ignored by either side of politics.

This came to a head when Ron led union opposition to Bligh Government proposals to privatise public assets and, in particular, the railways.

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PHOTO RIGHT:
Ron Monaghan,
(affectionally known
as “Mono”) was a
quiet champion
for the rights of
working people in
Queensland for more
than thirty years.



Who’s who at the RTBU

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We can only rely on ourselves

We cannot rely on good laws or good government in the never-ending battle to protect our rights and conditions.

One crucial lesson from the re-election of the Morrison LNP Government in May is that workers cannot rely on anyone other than themselves and their union-member workmates to protect hard-won rights and conditions.

Every condition and every dollar we earn above the minimum standards was fought for and won by union members taking risks and working collectively.

None of the wages and conditions we have been given to us by generous bosses or the government and we should not take them for granted.

With the re-election of the Morrison LNP Federal Government, radical changes for the worse to Australia's workplace laws are already on the table (see p10). Employers may soon be given more powers to stop and obstruct the work of members who stand up for themselves and workmates.

The union is not an office in Brisbane. It is not the President or the Secretary. The union is YOUR UNION: RTBU members working throughout Queensland. Unions are democratic collections of workers fighting for a better lot, with improvements to wages, conditions and most importantly safety.

That also means that joining your union is about more than paying your dues. To get the most benefit out of your union membership for yourself and your workmates, you should join your union and **get involved.**

You will see that as a theme running through this edition of The Advocate, as we dive a little deeper into the stories of members, delegates, and branch councillors.

If you would like to get more involved in your union; as a delegate, youth committee member, or find out more about the union's democratic structure, please do not hesitate to contact the office on (07) 3839 4988 or email info@rtbu.com.au ☐

President's Report



Bruce Mackie
Queensland State
President
07 3839 4988.



You spend your life staying on track, so do it for your family too.

Prioritise the ones who matter most.

As an RTBU member, you (and your partner) are entitled to a free standard Will. Our new online service is fast, easy and includes expert legal advice. Have peace of mind knowing your loved ones will be looked after.

Don't put it off any longer.
Unionwills.com.au



WE FIGHT FOR FAIR
Since 1968

Mono did not blink and stared down the few union leaders who tried to argue for Bligh's privatisation plans. Fortunately, those traitors are gone and could never influence Ron who had principles that were far too solid and clearly saw right from wrong. Ron's leadership leveraged the strength of the union movement when it brought down the Bligh Government. At the following election, Ron again provided strong leadership in working collaboratively with affiliates, such as the RTBU, to establish the very successful *Stand for Queensland* campaign which threw out the disastrous, one-term Neman LNP Government.

Because of Ron's steadfastness on asset sales, selling assets is now off the table for any party that wants to win government in Queensland.

A particular highlight during his tenure was the successful fight to protect and enhance Queensland's Labour Day celebrations. For three years Queensland workers honoured Labour Day in May despite the Newman Government's effort to move the holiday to October.

Perhaps Ron's greatest achievement is the care, attention, and effort he directed to the Stolen Wage case, to retrieve money taken by the state government when it used First Nations people as free labour. Because of Ron's support, First Nations workers have started receiving reparations for their decades-old cases of wage theft.

Ron fought for working people until the end, campaigning during the federal election for better care for cancer patients. Ron is survived by his wife, Vicki, their eight children, and four grandchildren.

Ron Monaghan: a true friend and staunch ally of rail, tram & bus workers and he will not be forgotten by the RTBU.

State Government commits to an extra 430 weekly train services for south-east Queensland

The Palaszczuk State Labor Government has funded an extra 430 train services, and 59 existing services will be upgraded from three-carriages to six, in a move that added 200,000 seats across the south-east Queensland network each week from July 2019.

This next stage of improvements has restored train services to the level originally planned for the opening of the Redcliffe Peninsula Line in late 2016.

The ongoing rollout of the Next Generation Rollingstock (NGR) fleet will see 59 existing services upgraded from three-carriages to six-carriages, with a total of 200,000 extra seats introduced.

Members have undertaken an incredible amount of work to make this happen—despite the continued denigration by the State LNP Opposition and their allies in *The Courier-Mail*. These improvements to south-east Queensland's network were underpinned by the largest driver recruitment and training program in Queensland Rail's history.

172 new drivers have completed their training and entered service since October 2016, representing a net increase of 105 (as at 16 June 2019). Your union has been there to make sure that the process was done in a way that considered the rights and interests of members, and was done properly the first time.

First freight trains resume on Mount Isa Line

The first freight trains successfully navigated the re-opened Mount Isa Line in late April. This was the first freight train in more than twelve weeks following flood damage to hundreds of kilometres of the line between Cloncurry and Hughenden in February.

The Mount Isa line is such an important supply line for Queensland's mineral and agricultural exports—as well as containerised freight—its reopening ahead of schedule (thanks to the hard work of RTBU members) represents a lifeline for many north-western towns and communities.

It took a 400-person-strong taskforce working tirelessly (members from Queensland Rail, Glencore and Pacific National) to restore the line. A huge tent city sprang up outside Julia Creek to shelter the several-hundred-strong work contingent.

The *Inlander* passenger service, which runs between Townsville and Mount Isa twice per week, resumed services in May.

Christmas Eve Public Holiday

The Rail, Tram & Bus Union (and our members) are very happy to endorse the Palaszczuk ALP Government's proposal to make Christmas Eve past 6 PM a part public holiday.

This proposal recognises that it is sometimes just as painful to be away from family on Christmas Eve—as it is on Christmas or Boxing Days themselves. Many



LEFT: An Aurizon Bulk carrier travels the newly-restored Mount Isa Line. Several hundred kilometres of the track were destroyed in February's flood.

Photo supplied Queensland Rail.

of our members are ferrying Queenslanders safely to their homes on trains and buses, or ensuring that vital freight deliveries arrive on time, or any of the other thousands of essential transport tasks across the state.

Premier Palaszczuk said the move would ensure Queensland workers get a fair go and fair pay on that most important of nights and during this year's festive season.

"It would ensure workers have the right to have Christmas Eve off as a public holiday just as they do for Christmas Day.

"While the government can't restore the weekend penalty rate cuts inflicted upon some 160,000 Queenslanders by the then Turnbull/Morrison Government we can at least do the right thing for people working on Christmas Eve."

Unsurprisingly, the business community is opposing any move that might see them pay workers more.

Your union invited submissions from members before it made its own submission to the enquiry.

Here are just of the statements we received from members right across the state.

"I have not spent a Christmas Eve with my family for the last seven years because I have worked driving a bus so others can go about getting ready for the festivities. I think anyone who works on Christmas Eve deserves to be paid extra."

"Christmas Eve is a time to spend time with family and also go to the Christmas Eve Church service as a family."

"What a great idea. It will give people more time to spend with family and friends and enjoy a special time of year"

"As a shift worker every year family and friends have get togethers which often only takes place once or twice a year. I rarely can attend due to work commitments."

"I have worked for QR for 23 years. My job involves always being home Christmas Day, however at times, I have not made it home for Christmas Eve, or have left for work Christmas Day, due to a shift worker roster."

We were always to be home Christmas Day, and now we are home part of the day."

I wish to spend Christmas Eve with my family as many others do. I do shift work to pay the bills but give up many events, weddings, parties, funerals to work shift work away on long distance trains."

Cross River Rail fully funded and going ahead

Cross River is finally, definitely, absolutely going ahead, with the contract between the Palaszczuk State Labor Government and the Pulse Consortium signed on the 30 June 2019.

This vital piece of transport infrastructure is going ahead despite the Morrison LNP Federal Government offering zero dollars for the project in its most recent budget. The private sector will contribute \$1.479 billion to the project, while the state government will continue to fund its share with \$5.409 billion set aside. The multi-billion-dollar project includes a 10.2-kilometre stretch of rail track, with 5.9 kilometres of tunnelled track, and includes the construction of four underground stations.

Cross River Rail will deliver an extra 18,000 seats on Brisbane trains, take 14,000 drivers off the roads, cut travel time on existing south-east Queensland train network and create more than 7,700 jobs.

“The Pulse Consortium” includes Italian contractor Ghella, which worked on the Legacy Way tunnel, and companies previously involved in Sydney and Melbourne rail and road projects. It will be responsible for the Tunnel, Stations and Development construction phase—including the tunnel from Dutton Park to Normanby and the construction of four new, state-of-the-art underground stations at Boggo Road, Woolloongabba, Albert Street and Roma Street.

“The Unity Alliance” is responsible for the rail integration systems, the track through the tunnels, incorporating the new rail with the existing network and a major upgrade at the Ekka station. The alliance has worked with Queensland Rail in the past to build more than \$2.5 billion worth of infrastructure on the south-east Queensland train network.

RTBU Delegate Ren Clinton has been seconded to the RTBU Office to help members who are affected by Cross River Rail issues.

The incredible, unbelievable Bulk

It took more than twelve months, several rounds of protected industrial action, and a vote to reject an unfair agreement management tried to get over the line, but RTBU members in Aurizon Bulk have finally reached an in-principle agreement.

Negotiations between your RTBU representatives and Aurizon Bulk started last year on 13 September. Since then, there have been tens of meetings between your representatives and management, yet it took a rejected ballot for management to see reason on several key issues.

Paramount in negotiations was achieving the work/life balance measures our members needed as they carried out their jobs in the disjointed world of shift work.

Our members demanded improved rostering systems to help workers’ work/life balance. For traincrew this meant having more reliable rostering, which we won with reform to the forecast roster, more ability for roster committees to deliver RDO’s beyond the minimum, and larger payments for shift extensions and changes of roster.

In the maintenance part of the agreement, the majority of the workers covered by the Aurizon Bulk Agreement are shift workers. Members were rightly angry heading into bargaining that Aurizon had played a three card trick last time on shift arrangements, assuring everyone it would be fine, then as soon as the agreement was made, taking shiftworker status off everyone. It was sneaky and in no way deserved. Achieving a settlement which will see those members returned to shift worker status was a key victory.

Before there was any victory on these fronts, and others, there had to be a fight—Aurizon were never giving in easily. Aurizon spent much of the early part of bargaining stalling and refusing to talk seriously.

In an attempt to break through this obstruction, members in Aurizon Bulk engaged in several industrial actions right across Queensland, including overtime bans and strike action.

At one point your union was called into the Fair Work Commission (Monday 27 May 2019) by Linfox! Linfox made a submission to the Commission—as a third party—calling for orders to stop a planned 48-hour work stoppage. Linfox claimed that the action by members at Aurizon Bulk would cause severe financial hardship if it went ahead.

They argued that as they had a hook-and-pull contract with Aurizon to haul their general freight throughout Queensland, any disruptions to services would have a major negative impact on their customers.

Terminating industrial action just because of flow-on effects to third parties would set a very dangerous precedent and could threaten all industrial action.

Fortunately, the Commission saw that workers would break no laws by taking action.

Following the long campaign though we did get Aurizon to the table in Brisbane. Aurizon took that opportunity to present their draft enterprise agreement. This draft left in many items that members had already rejected and strategically deleted some clauses in the current agreement that would have seen members lose out.

Of course, your union rejected the draft agreement. Aurizon responded by sending this substandard agreement to a vote—regardless of RTBU member opposition.

Predictably the management's proposed agreement was not only rejected, but with more than 90 per cent of RTBU members casting their ballot; 82 per cent of responses said "NO".

The industrial campaign recommenced and importantly after a marathon of negotiations agreement was reached at the table.

At the time of writing we are still working on the fine details of the agreement to ensure we can enforce commitments made by Aurizon. Before long that document will be made available to members and a vote will be held.

For members in Aurizon Bulk this has been a tough fight—we've been gearing up since the last round and by working together right across Queensland we have achieved some important milestones.

From here our job doesn't get easier. We need to make sure we remain vigilant, united and continue to press forward because we know that Aurizon are still the same employer we had to fight to get these agreements. ☐

What was won?

By members sticking together, taking action, and voting down the unfair agreement management tried to get over the line, RTBU members in Aurizon Bulk achieved a great win.

Wage increases of 2.5%, 2.3% and 2.25%;

Back pay of 2.25% to expiry of your 2015 agreement;

An Enterprise Agreement that is clear and easily understood by anyone;

A three-year term;

Rostering reforms for better work/life balance;

Roster committees empowered to deliver more than the minimum RDO's where business requirements are met;

Shift extensions (time worked beyond rostered shift) will be paid at 125% for year 1 and 150% thereafter

No earlier start than 5 am for rostered starts after RDO's and annual leave of more than a week;

Cancelled RDO and weekend work will be paid a minimum of 6 hours at the relevant rate of the day;

Defined shift lengths and union definitions of crewing configurations to be implemented after 12 months;

An additional 2 days of personal leave for Longreach traincrew;

Traincrew are to be finished by 6 pm before medicals;

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THEIR FAMILIES.



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Our members do not deserve such slander

In my role as the Queensland State Secretary I consider it a responsibility to ensure that members of the RTBU are treated with the respect they deserve as diligent, hardworking, highly-skilled workers.

So when I read the slander that the “journalists” from “newspapers” like the *Courier-Mail* keep piling onto members in Queensland Rail I have to step forward and set the record straight. I am sick to death of members being used as a punching bag by NewsCorp as they further their agenda against the Labor State Government.

Out of thousands of workers, three QR employees were terminated for drug use in the past 12 months and a supervisor was found to be authorising incorrect timesheets. This does not show a “culture of drug use and corruption”. Rather, it shows a system that has measures to discover employees who do the wrong thing and deal with them appropriately.

Employees in the Mayne Yard could be required to participate in random drug testing at any time of the day or night. The fact is that three employees from three entirely separate classifications represent just 0.2% of QR’s workforce. This is one of the lowest figures in any industry where drug testing occurs.

Journalists are not subject to random drug tests like employees at Queensland Rail are. I would love to see the results if such a regime were introduced at the *Courier-Mail*.

The *Courier-Mail*, yet again, has created a nonsensical story based on a few bits of information reported entirely out of context. I will always call this out as long as the *Courier-Mail* (or any other media) do it.

For the *Courier-Mail* to imply that hard-working, responsible employees in the Mayne Yards were either corrupt or indulging in illegal drugs is just a disgrace.□



Owen Doogan
Queensland
State Secretary
07 3839 4988.



Queensland State Secretary Owen Doogan at this year's Labour Day celebrations in Brisbane.

The harshest laws for unions in the developed world



Peter Allen
Queensland Principal
Industrial Officer
07 3839 4988.

New laws proposed by the re-elected Morrison LNP Government will give Australia the harshest restrictions for trade unions in the developed world—and break several existing international laws. Despite never mentioning it during the federal election campaign, Scott Morrison and the federal LNP have come back to their union-bashing “Ensuring Integrity” laws.

The (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Ensuring Integrity) Bill represents the biggest attack against unions and workers’ rights and conditions since *WorkChoices*, introduced in 2006 by the Federal Government led by John Howard. Following the 18 May Federal Election, the Senate is a lot friendlier to pro-business and anti-union, anti-worker interests.

A new report from the International Trade Union Research Centre has found the proposed laws are designed and aimed wholly “at undermining workers’ rights to organise freely and independently of the government”.

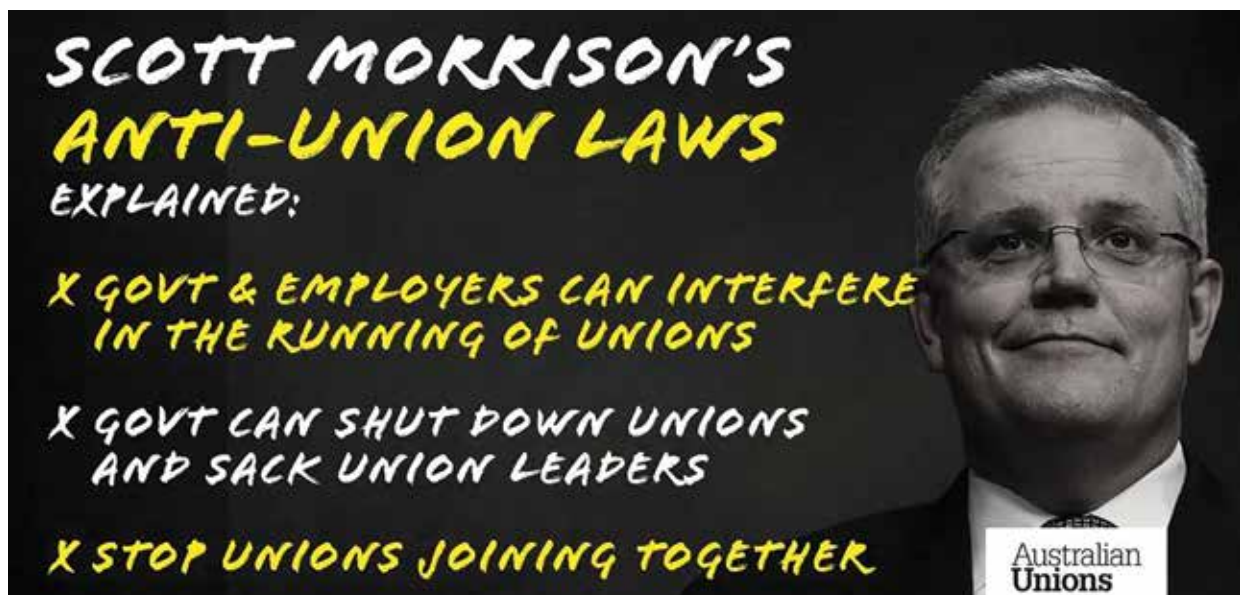
We have watched the last six years as the LNP has legislated more and more repressive workplace laws. Now, there exist very few legal options for workers to make a stand. These unjust laws have made the window for protected action—and the range of actions legally allowed when negotiating—smaller than ever. Meanwhile, it is nearly impossible for workers to legally go on strike.

What these new laws do is give the government the power to remove any union official or delegate from their own union for breaking these restrictions on protected industrial action. These laws comprise a variety of sweeping powers to interfere in and curtail the exercise of workers’ rights. The new laws are contrary to the principles of freedom of association enshrined in the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) *Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention of 1948*, and the *Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention 1949*—the Australian Government is a signatory to both of these conventions.

This crusade of the LNP against workers and unions is tiresome. I think all of us wish that Scott Morrison and the LNP would put just half of the effort it puts into trying to bust unions into fixing some of the huge messes revealed by the Royal Commission into the Banking Sector—which they voted against 26 times.

There is no precedent for the degree of punitive government interference in union activity in any democratic country.

By restricting further how unions and members can stand up for themselves, these laws will lead to more wage and super theft, more unsafe workplaces, and lower wages and diminished conditions.□



They just think we shouldn't exist...

Unions in Australia are already some of the most tightly regulated in the world. The amount of regulation and red tape placed on unions has increased exponentially since the election of the Abbott/Turnbull/Morrison LNP Government in 2013.

Although the Howard Government's anti-worker *WorkChoices* laws were wound back somewhat by the Rudd/Gillard ALP Government following its election in 2007, these changes were relatively small and superficial, giving the LNP a greater platform from which to ramp up its union-busting agenda to the startling extremes we now see.

The LNP already attempted to introduce these laws in 2017, but had them knocked back in the Senate. This new Bill provides the government (and other parties) even greater powers to meddle in union affairs, get leaders sacked, and shut down worker organisations.

The nearest equivalent is in countries notorious for their abuses of human rights. For example the government of Kazakhstan is persecuting independent trade unions.

It is already exceptionally onerous for unions to initiate protected industrial action—jumping through huge numbers of complex regulatory hoops. The fundamental right to strike and withdraw our labour is virtually non-existent (shown last year when RTBU NSW brothers and sisters were prevented from striking). Failure to follow any of these arduous regulations to the very letter can result in huge fines for both individual union officials and rank-and-file members.

As the ACTU says,

“a company can repeatedly put workers' lives at risk, commit wage theft, illegally dump toxic chemicals or produce dangerous products and not be wound up, whereas a union could have its registration cancelled if a group of members take unprotected industrial action.”

The mounting restrictions around strike actions include:

- prohibiting them during enterprise agreements;
- full disclosure to employers of the nature and timing of actions;
- outlawing sympathy strikes;

- limiting strikers' speech; and
- prohibiting actions that affect public services (think public transport!).

The “Ensuring Integrity” Bill goes beyond “holding to account rogue union officials”. It stops union members having full democratic control over their own union.

Disciplinary actions that can be imposed on union officials and members include:

- dismissal;
- placing unions into administration;
- restricting what union members can do with their own funds and resources; and
- altering a union's eligibility rules around what occupations and workplaces it has coverage over.

The Queensland Law Society has criticised these proposed laws, warning they are “unjustified” and go much further than the recommendations of the trade union royal commission.

A trade union movement weakened further with unjust laws will leave wages and condition at the mercy of big corporations, and putting more workers' safety at risk. □

These new laws are designed solely to reduce the presence of unions in Australia's workplaces.



Labour Day 2019

Thousands of RTBU members across Queensland marched and celebrated Labour day in some of the biggest festivities ever.

Union members, friends, supporters and families marched, celebrated, and gathered for food, drink and festivities to mark Labour Day 2019.

As the rhetoric and laws targeting union members increase (and are set to increase with the re-election of the Morrison LNP Government), this year's Labour Day celebrations were a reminder to the powers-that-be that if they decide to take on union members they have a fight on their hands.

In Brisbane, more than 40,000 people marched along the streets of the CBD and Fortitude Valley on their way to the biggest ever Labour Day celebrations at the Brisbane Showgrounds. More than 500 of those marchers were RTBU members—along with their friends, family and some very union-friendly pooches.

Members in RTBU bandanas enjoyed a few cool bevies and some great food at the tent before listening to speeches from Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk and ACTU Secretary Sally McManus.

In Ipswich, the Saturday march was soaked by torrential rain. But this only emboldened those who attended to show what solidarity and dedication really meant—rain, hail or shine Labour Day goes ahead.

The Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast Labour Day marches and picnics had much better weather, with members across Queensland unions enjoying the Sunday sunshine

There were RTBU members marching in many locations including Mackay, which enjoyed a record turnout of union members for the march and family fun day.

In Rockhampton, the march started at the Pilbeam Theatre Carpark (Cnr Cambridge & Bolsover Street) and finished at the Riverside Park, Quay Street for a free sausage sizzle, food, drinks and entertainment.

In Townsville, more than 1,500 workers marched along the Strand before families spent the day on rides, listening to live music and enjoying great food. RTBU Branch Council Member Josie Burke (see page 13) carried out the “Acknowledgment to Traditional Owners”. □

RIGHT PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Members in Brisbane gather with their families ahead of the march on Monday 6 May 2019. | In Barcaldine, members decked out one of the Queensland Rail vehicles for the occasion. | One proud member gives the “Victory” sign. | Three women members kindly stop for a photo along Whickam Street in Fortitude Valley. | RTBU Members march along Victoria Street in Mackay | Members in Gladstone also made the most of the family fun day |

RTBU Members in Brisbane march along Wickham Street, Fortitude Valley on their way to the Brisbane Showgrounds.





CLOCKWISE FROM FAR RIGHT:

Members gather before the Rockhampton march | Members in Townsville gather before their march along The Strand. | The crowd in Brisbane was bigger than ever, with members and families from all divisions getting together for the march and family fun day. Tejinder Dhillon from the Willawong Bus Depot & his family | Jaime Cummings with Peter Bates, winner of the RTBU Youth raffle Jaime organised in support of the Brisbane Children's Hospital. | Seamus Coye & Pauline Moore from the Carina Depot





New superannuation laws

How will they affect your death and disability insurance?

On 1 July 2019, the Federal Government's *Protecting Your Super Package Act* came into effect. This follows on from the banking Royal Commission which clearly demonstrated that many bank-owned super funds were deducting excessive fees from account balances, despite providing substandard services. *The Package Act* is designed to protect account holders from this happening again.

The Package has two main changes that may affect you. The first change is that members of choice super products and MySuper funds will lose their automatic death and disability insurance if their account is inactive (meaning no contribution was received) for more than 16 months.

The second change is that members with balances under \$6,000 whose accounts have been inactive for more than 16 months will have their accounts paid to the Australian Tax Office (ATO), who will then try to transfer it to an active super fund in your name.

So, why are these changes important? You may not know that Australian workers are provided with automatic death and disability lump sum insurance through their default super funds, which are called MySuper accounts.

Automatic insurance in super, particularly total and permanent disability (TPD) insurance has been very successful in providing millions of Australians with cover when they would otherwise have none. At Maurice Blackburn, we have helped hundreds of union members access their TPD insurance entitlements through their super accounts when they have had to stop work due to illness or injury.

There are some very important things you need to be aware of:

- If you lose cover due to the reforms, you will still be able to make a claim for your TPD or income protection entitlements as long as you had insurance cover when you became ill or injured
- If you stop work due to illness or injury after 1 July 2019, you will be only eligible to claim your

insurance if you have active cover on the date you stopped work

- If you have an illness or medical condition, and decide to either soldier on or wait for your condition to stabilise before deciding whether to permanently stop working, you may lose your cover. You should check with your super fund as a matter of priority

You can avoid losing insurance cover by making sure you have at least \$6,000 in your super account and by making at least one contribution per year. If either of these are not an option, you can also contact the fund directly and opt-in to default insurance cover.

Maurice Blackburn encourages union members who are unsure about their insurance needs to seek independent financial advice about the right cover for them. We can refer a reputable financial adviser if you don't have one.

Don't lose your insurance.

Garry injured his knee at work in October 2017. He has been receiving statutory workers compensation benefits since. His employer has not been required to pay his super because he hasn't earned any wages. As at 1 July 2019, the new changes mean his total and permanent disability TPD insurance will automatically cease.

If Garry can't return to work, he can still make a claim for TPD insurance as part of his super as he became unable to work from October 2017 when he was still insured.

However if Garry returns to work on light duties, he probably won't be eligible for new TPD cover for his knee injury – so if he ceases work again in the future, he won't have a claim.

If you have suffered an injury or illness that has impacted your ability to work in any way, you ask your union rep for a referral to Maurice Blackburn Lawyers. Free legal advice is a benefit of your union membership, so it won't cost you anything to find out where you stand. □



By Owen Doogan
Queensland
State Secretary



Yvonne is with Australia's Most Trusted Superannuation brand

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The Southern District

Southern District Report

Facilitator called in as Queensland Rail Agreement Negotiations drag on...

Delegates across QR have put in a lot of hard work over the last few months representing our members in the six agreements up for negotiation, but it's been slow going.

After a lot of delays on QR's end, an independent facilitator, Don Brown, has been called in to help get bargaining back on track. Don has been independently appointed, but he has a background in the Union movement. The September round of meetings with him in attendance have yielded more useful discussion than previous meetings, however delegates report that QR still aren't coming to the table on key claims.

Mental Health Matters

Mental health keeps coming up as a key concern for members across the Union.

Without clear provisions, mental health support is often left up to a manager's discretion. When staff do suffer a psychological injury as a result of their work, all too often the system fails them. They don't get the same level of support they would for a physical injury.

Recently Lucas Kennedy visited Central Station after a passenger with a knife had to be subdued by police. Lucas was concerned about Station staff, and wanted to share information about the new union funded support service—Workers' Psychological Support Service www.wpss.org.au—so they could talk to someone confidentially. This is an excellent initiative, but it's a bandaid not a solution. RTBU Youth are making mental

health a campaign focus, so watch this space if you'd like to get involved.

Progress Rail

Solidarity and preparedness for action saved the 9-day fortnight LDO for members at Progress Rail at the Redbank Workshops.

Progress Rail is a sub-division of Caterpillar which has the contract for the repair and maintenance of locomotives and rolling stock for Aurizon. They have recently finalised their agreement but it was not before employers sought to remove the 9-day fortnight LDO. Members decided that this was worth fighting for.

The employer refused to back down, so members of combined unions ran a ballot for protected action—which came back overwhelmingly in favour of action. This was enough to change the employer's mind and resulted in the LDO and other conditions being saved without one minute lost on any strike action.

This was a long and hard-fought agreement led by dedicated people like RTBU Delegate Brenton Smallwood.

The moral of the story is to always be prepared to get out on the grass and stare down the bosses. Sometimes the bosses blink.

Delegate Spotlight - John Lloyd, Bombardier

John Lloyd lives in the Sunshine Coast Hinterland town of Woombye, although he's originally from London.

"I went backpacking in Australia when I was younger, and I loved the sunshine."



Ross Schimke
Southern Organiser



Natalie Neideck
Organiser

RIGHT: Members at Progress Rail stared management down with a wonderful display of solidarity and preparedness for action.





LEFT: After this interview, John did join other RTBU Delegates for some solid training in how to look out for their workmates.

John works with the Mobile Fleet Maintenance Crew of Bombardier, the company that was awarded the contract for the maintenance of the New Generation Rollingstock (NGR). The main stabling yards for Bombardier are at Wulkuraka, Ipswich; however, John works mostly out of the yards at Kippa-Ring.

“I come from a construction background, and had done a lot of FIFO work, but I wanted something that would let me spend more time with the family.”

The Mobile Fleet Crew are responsible for making sure the carriages in the NGR fleet are fit for the next day’s service. This could be anything from fixing seats and windows, to updating software and internal wiring—whatever it takes to keep the fleet safely in service.

John said he had no real ambitions to be a delegate, but also knew that “someone had to do it”.

“I view things rather simply,” said John. “There is a world without unions and a world with them and I know which one I would much rather live in.”

“I have seen what the industry degenerates to without unions (in post-Thatcher Britain), and I don’t want to see that here.”

“I like being a delegate. It is rewarding. I think you need a certain number of skills to be good at it though. You have to be a good communicator of information to people. You need to pacify people. And other times you need to escalate.”

When you become a delegate, your union will provide training in these skills and many more.

The members at Bombardier recently had a problem with vehicle allowances not being



LEFT: Delegate for the Bombardier workers John Lloyd with his family’s cat Batman.

John said he was a delegate because he has seen a world without unions, and knows which he prefers.

paid when workers were using their personal cars because of a shortage of work vehicles. For six months members fought for their back pay but it wasn't until the RTBU disputed them on the issue that they eventually won.

John has been working hard to get his workmates to join the RTBU ahead of the upcoming negotiations for a new agreement—set to commence later this year.

"It has been pretty easy to recruit in the mobile fleet," said John. "We started with one or two members, but the lads just naturally see the benefits. Some guys come from trade union backgrounds, and some other guys see the winds blowing and know they are safer joining their mates."

"Also, I think the managers at Bombardier are some of the best recruiters for the RTBU."

Members are in the early stages of compiling a log of claims, and John is excited about what can be achieved with strong union activism.

"I think the difference between a good EBA and a bad EBA, and quite a lot of dollars, will have a lot to do with our membership. The more united we are the better deal we are going to get."

2019 Anna Stewart Memorial Project: Kristee Helm

Kristee Helm works as a porter for Queensland Rail at the South Brisbane railway station. She started work for QR 2 years ago but signed on as a delegate straight away. She is also a member of the RTBU Women's Committee and was this year's nominee for the Anna Stewart memorial project.

The Anna Stewart Memorial Project is designed to increase the participation of women in their unions. Over one week, women members are given a taste of life behind-the-scenes—not only at their union—but another union as well.

Participants move out of their comfort zones and see what form the union takes in many different sectors and workplaces. "I come from a union family, and I know what it is like to work in industries that don't have delegates to keep an eye on things, so when I got the chance to be a delegate at QR I jumped at the chance straight away."



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“I was very excited the whole time. I love being a delegate, but sometimes it is very hard to keep an eye on your day job and looking after your fellow workers as well. As part of the Anna Stewart Memorial project I got to work with people whose only job was to make sure members were doing ok. I saw how union staff would drop everything, and spring into action if one of their members were in trouble.”

On the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday Kristee spent her time with her union (RTBU) visiting bus depots, train gang workshops, as well as many other workplaces. On the Thursday and Friday, she spent her time with the Queensland Nurses and Midwives’ Union (QNMU).

“I loved it! I studied nursing for a year, so I had a little bit of knowledge about the issues being discussed.”

Kristee says that she best advice she received was to be herself.

“Don’t try to copy what other delegates do— just do what you would do as you would do it. I am trying to take this advice to heart.”

“I would 100% recommend this program to any women union members. It was the best experience.”

If you would like to find out more about getting involved in programs such as the Anna Stewart Memorial Project, please contact RTBU Women’s Officer Carla Jones at the RTBU office.

Who was Anna Stewart?

A former journalist and active Victorian union official from 1974 to 1983, Anna Stewart died tragically in 1983, aged 35. Her involvement with the union movement began at a time when women workers comprised one-third of the paid workforce, but the few industries in which women were employed offered jobs that were poorly paid, lacked job security, flexibility, skills recognition and unpaid maternity leave.

The influence of Anna’s work is difficult to measure. Many women gained strength and confidence from her example of combining motherhood and a career. Women unionists still have Anna’s example to assist and support them in the struggles that continue today.□



LEFT: Kristee Helm is the 2019 Anna Stewart Memorial participant from the RTBU. For one week she got to see how her union worked, and another union as well.

The Northern District

Northern District Report



Les Moffitt Northern District Organiser

Cairns / Kuranda Scenic Rail history

This quaint contraption (see below)—is a motor vehicle with its wheels converted to run on the Kuranda railway lines. It was used by Queensland Railways to take VIPs on tours of the district. It was invariably driven by Ted Forward, a railmotor driver who joined Queensland Rail in Cairns in February 1911 and retired in June 1960.

Ted always stopped at a particular spot along the Kuranda Range—near Red Bluff—to show visitors the magnificent view, through the foliage, down the Barron Gorge into Cairns. In the 1930s, this spot was named “Forwards Lookout” in recognition of Ted’s special efforts in escorting visitors on tours. This photo comes from Edna Taylor, daughter of Ted Forward, who was given a ride along the Kuranda Scenic Rail for her 99th Birthday in 2016.

“My father worked in the railways when I was a little girl, first as a clerk, then as a cleaner, a steam train driver, and a rail motor driver,” Edna said in 2016.

To find out more about the history of the 128-year-old Kuranda Railway there is a book that is no longer in print, so keep an eye out. *Tracks of Triumph: A tribute to the pioneers who built the famous Kuranda Scenic Railway* by Alan Hudson. Pick it up if you see it in your local second-hand book store.

Pacific National shunting incident

A Terminal Operator who was carrying out the role of a Locomotive Shunt Driver at the Pacific National depot at Woree was stood down from work and issued with a Show Cause notice due to an alleged safety incident. He was moving a light engine in the yard without the assistance of a Shunter on the ground.

This issue has raised concerns in respect to the recent updated *Driver Only Operation* procedure dated 19 January 2019 which has caused some confusion about moving locomotives long end leading in a shunting environment.

It has been common practice in a number of areas around the state to carry out a similar movement to what occurred in Cairns which is now being interpreted by management as a serious safety risk. Locomotive Drivers who have concerns about this procedure should seek clarification from their management team to ensure they are not placing themselves in a situation where they may face disciplinary action.

They fought so that we have

It was great to catch up at the 2019 RTBU Branch Council Dinner with some retirees who were union delegates during their career in the rail industry.

BOTTOM LEFT: This is a photo of pioneering Kuranda Scenic Railway employee Ted Crawford driving visitors in his railmotor as he shows the beauty of his favourite spots, one of which was named after him - Forward Lookout. Photo courtesy of Edna Taylor





Tourist Train members have their voice heard

Schedule 2 – Tourist Train of the Queensland Rail Travel & Tourism and Other Employees Agreement only applies to workers on the Cairns / Kuranda Scenic Rail service.

Because this schedule only applies to members in the Cairns area, and those members would have better knowledge of what they needed out of negotiations, local negotiations were held just for that schedule—commencing on 29 May 2019.

Local RTBU Delegates Brian Towning, Ben Walker and Shay Woodham, along with the RTBU Northern District Organiser Les Moffitt, are conducting negotiations with management. Local members have presented a strong log of claims, back by solid evidence. ☐

ABOVE: The Kuranda Scenic Railway snakes its way up the range.
IMAGE: Shutterstock

LEFT: Members at Kuranda Scenic Railway have started negotiations with Queensland Rail regarding the specialist clauses in the EBA that apply only to them.

BELOW: RTBU Northern District Organiser Les Moffitt with former RTBU Delegate and Branch Councillor, Brian Doonan.

Brian Doonan [far right - with Les Moffitt] has just turned 76 years old and now lives in Bundaberg. He worked for Queensland Rail as a Guard in Bowen for many years. Brian held the position of Australian Railways Union (ARU) Bowen Sub Branch Secretary as well as a Branch Councillor in the 1970s and 1980s. Brian handed the local delegate role in 1986 to the now Northern District Organiser in Townsville Les Moffitt.

Members enjoy a lot of hard-earned conditions that were fought for and won by the older generation of workers.

They put their livelihoods on the line so many times to stand up to bosses, and win the benefits workers have today, Brian is one of many older generation ARU / RTBU Delegates who still proudly supports the union movement even in retirement.



The Central District

Central District Report

Old locomotives put workers and the environment at risk

As members in Aurizon Bulk fight to get the same treatment as their brothers and sisters in Aurizon Coal, another issue that shows a lack of respect to members in Aurizon Bulk is the extreme neglect on locomotives and other equipment, since the closure of the Rockhampton Diesel Shed.

In this photo of an old diesel Aurizon Bulk locomotive, we see cancer-causing fumes spewing out the top, harming workers and making claims by Aurizon of environmental sustainability less than credible.

It even has a QR logo on the locomotive—more than ten years after QRNational transformed into Aurizon.

Some members have compared this locomotive to the way Aurizon Bulk have approached negotiations—sitting around idling, blowing out fumes, chewing up time and then when you need them to work, they fail.

It always pays to have good active delegates

Aurizon announced that it intends to (once again) use drivers to shunt complex yards. Your union is aware of this issue.

While shunting is rightly part of the make-up of a driver's competencies, Aurizon intends to give only two days' training in a complex yard. This

is insufficient time to learn how to navigate any particular yard safely—appropriate training can take up to six weeks. So much for Aurizon's commitment to zero harm! Delegates in Aurizon will be monitoring the situation, but there may be another dispute...on the Aurizon.

Aurizon to sell Rail Grinder business

Aurizon has sold its rail grinding business to American company Loram. The sale will be completed at the end of September this year, from which point workers in the business will be working for Loram.

This announcement is bewildering, given the rail grinding business is very profitable with a great team of workers who go out of their way to deliver great outcomes for Aurizon.

A rail grinder is used to restore the profile and remove irregularities from worn tracks to extend their life and to improve the ride of trains using the track. Rail-grinding equipment may be mounted on a dedicated rail-grinding train which, are long beasts that may even have sleeping quarters. The grinding wheels, of which there may be more than one hundred, restore the track to its correct profile. This improves train times, fuel efficiency and reduces noise.

Rumours that Aurizon wanted to sell its rail grinding business have been in the press since last year, but **workers were only told at the beginning of June 2019.** Although there were no redundancies, all

employees would be working for another company.

"It's a big shock to the system," said Andrew Wells, delegate for members in Aurizon Infrastructure. "Some of these guys have been working for the same company for twenty years. To suddenly be told you have been sold off is a big deal."

Aurizon has rail grinding bases in South Australia, Western Australia and Mackay.

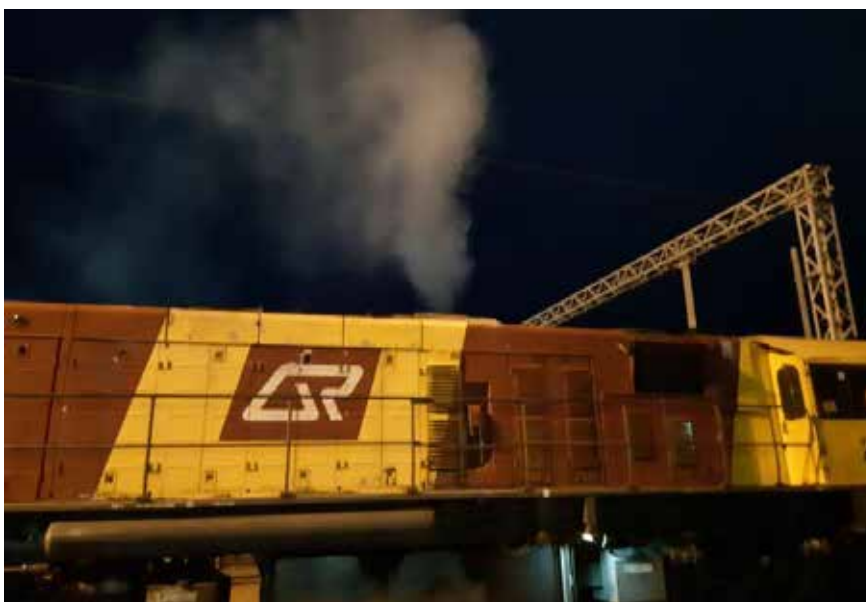


Craig Allen
Central District
Organiser



Bruce Mackie
Queensland State
President
Central District
Organiser

RIGHT: No this photo wasn't taken in 2005. It is an Aurizon Loco, that still has the old QR logo on it, spewing out smoke while it sits idle.





Andrew has been a member then delegate at Aurizon since Queensland Rail days. He knows what it is like when the company around you changes almost overnight.

“When QRNational was first made into Aurizon, they rolled over most of the QR agreement. But I tell you, by the time we got to negotiating with Aurizon in 2015—we had an incredible fight on our hands.”

Delegates like Andrew will be making sure this transition is done properly, and that the relationship between workers and their new employer Loram is respectful.

Loram is a known player in the local rail grinding market, with a presence working for miner Fortescue Metals Group in Western Australia. Loram is also one of the largest manufacturers of rail grinding vehicles and built the vehicles used by Aurizon’s grinding fleet.

Pacific National Coal still trying to squeeze unpaid work from members

Pacific National (PN) Coal are still pushing the boundaries when it comes to drivers mentoring or supervising trainees.

Your union wrote to PN and in plain language set them straight. See below:

“A level 4 driver as per the EA and the latest version of the RCOP is only required to provide supervision and guidance and level 4 drivers are prepared to do that, but they are not required to “train” i.e., impart knowledge or upskill, but are to ensure the safety and integrity of the trainee and the train and network.

Therefore, my advice to traincrew has not changed, as a level 4 driver they have a positive obligation to provide guidance and supervision, however, are under NO obligation to provide upskilling or training, this is the job of a level 5 mentor driver.

PN Intermodal Linehaul Drivers get better rosters

A big congratulations to our members in Pacific National Intermodal Linehaul Drivers Rockhampton who stood firm to get a better outcome for rostering. They made it clear they aren’t going to accept inferior rostering—and with the RTBU backing them to the hilt—they got a great outcome. Collective action gets another win, great work and great effort. □

ABOVE: One of the Aurizon Rail Grinders makes its way along the rails new Two Wells in South Australia. The Aurizon Rail Grinding business has been sold in its entirety to American company Loram.

Photo courtesy of Jack Chambers.
[flickr.com/photos/24523198@N04/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/24523198@N04/)



LEFT: Aurizon Infrastructure delegate Andrew Wells was on the phones straight away to check up on the members who were told they were being sold off to Loram.

The Tram & Bus Division

Tram and Bus Division Report



Tom Brown Tram and Bus Secretary
0430 539 579



Bennett Roche Tram and Bus Organiser
0419 769 130

RIGHT: A picture of the old Spring Hill Tram Sheds. April this year marked 50 years since the last tram rode on Brisbane Streets.

RTBU Members' Fund

Did you know there are many medical conditions that you can get as a driver that will knock you out of driving for six months or more?

These conditions include, but are not limited to:

- Sleep apnoea
- Vertigo
- Stroke
- Heart attack

This all may be fine for a permanent employee, with enough sick leave banked up over years of service, but with casual bus drivers now making up 30 per cent of the fleet and most of these drivers receiving twenty hours of work a week or less, losing six months of work is simply too much.

Your union has upgraded the amounts available in the RTBU Members' Fund to better reflect these modern realities. To find out more, contact the union office on (07) 3839 4988 or email info@rtbu.com.au.

Billions for Buses

At last, the new Brisbane bus contract has been signed off. After nearly four years of uncertainty, we can look forward to four years of growth and job security.

The new agreement sees the State Government contribute \$1 billion to the running of the BCC network. This comes on top of \$790 million pledged by the Council in its budget. But wait. There's more! The State Government has also put up \$96 million for the Northern and Eastern Transitway projects to

build priority bus lanes for Gympie and Old Cleveland Roads. This will include a new layover area at Chermside.

State Transport Minister Mark Bailey said, "this contract also gives certainty to bus drivers who do a fantastic job keeping us all moving".

The RTBU feels that Council should take this opportunity to provide certainty to its casual drivers, many of whom are existing on less than 20 hours a week.

We call on Transport for Brisbane (TfB) to go on a casual conversion drive and offer all those interested the chance to gain a traineeship.

Now would also be the ideal time to cap the number of casual drivers so that there is plenty of work for those still employed.

50 years since the last tram

13 April 2019 marked 50 years since the last tram trundled down the streets of Brisbane.

You can still see the tracks today in two places. A couple of hundred metres of track is visible on Old Cleveland Road at Carina and a short section remains beside the old Victoria Bridge archway, near the Cultural Centre at South Bank. And of course the occasional, preserved tram stop.

At the time this union's forebears fought the decision to remove trams from Brisbane which resulted in a 24-day strike of motormen, conductors and bus drivers in 1968.

"Standing firm has done the trick" | Mark Lahey—Gold Coast Tram Delegate

The Gold Coast Light Rail opened five years ago, and Mark Lahey was there from the start. He is a Customer Service Officer doing shift work on the network. Customer Service Officers check tickets, issue fines, and keep order on the tram system.

Mark's shifts are all over the shop; like 5pm - 3am; 6am to 4pm; 7pm - 5am. So time off, when he gets it, is precious. But



he knows he might get a call from any of his workmates who need help.

“Sure. That phone might ring, but that doesn’t bother me. If they need my help I will give it, and I understand that a lot of them have 9-5 jobs and that’s ok,” said Mark.

Mark stepped up to become a delegate after he saw the level of attacks coming from managers towards other union members.

“I am ex-military and I worked as a Sheriff with the Federal Court. That gave me a bit of confidence that I could do the job. In the beginning, we had to fight for basic things like decent radios and proper uniforms. We had to keep on their backs about actually honouring the EBA clauses. Happily, we are a bit past that now,” Mark said.

“It has taken a while. But standing firm has done the trick.”

The members at Gold Coast Trams are about to go into negotiations for their second agreement with their employer Kelios Downer Rail (KDR). Mark is feeling good about the upcoming negotiations as he has worked hard on getting his mates to join the union.

“Oh yeah, we had a few guys who were very anti-union. But when they see the unfair things that go on, even the most hostile of them will soon come over. And the more guys we have in the union going into negotiations, the more likely we are going to get what we need.”

Many bosses like to say what they would like to do to union delegates, but delegates who know the law, know their rights, and know the limits of what they can and can’t do, rarely suffer from the threats of bosses.

“I think the others seeing that even though I go up against the managers all the time, they haven’t hurt me yet. I think that is important to know.”

Mark says being a delegate has given him a whole range of skills that have helped him in his day-to-day life.



LEFT: Mark Lahey is an RTBU Delegate with Gold Coast Trams. He says that “Standing Firm” has been the key to wins for members in his workplace.

“The amount I have learned about conflict resolution. How to read people, and how to de-escalate a situation. That has come in very handy,”

Luckily Mark isn’t alone. He has several proxies that step up when he is not around to help.

“Louise is another Customer Service Officer who is one of my proxies, so I am not alone.”

Mark says that Tom and Bennett from the Bus Division, and the others in the union office, have always had his back, but the thing is how much they haven’t been needed.

“Because of sticking to our guns, and not backing down in the face of some pretty hostile behaviour, and getting more people to join, we have some pretty good things and begrudging respect from management. We have gone from having no policies, to multiple policies to help us navigate our roles.

“Another proxy, Stephen, is great with numbers and he helps with making sure the rosters are all FAID tested properly,” said Mark.

FAID testing is a fatigue management system that is designed to prevent rosters from exhausting its workers.

RIGHT: From his time in the shearing sheds as a teenager, to a park ranger in Brisbane, and a Brisbane Bus Driver until his retirement in 2015, and beyond, Trevor is union through and through.

“Other things like managers using CCTV to keep an eye on workers. We’ve put an end to that.”

“We have a pretty definite set of items on our log of claims coming into these negotiations,” said Mark. “One of them is making sure that we change the benchmark for pay rises in our agreement from WPI (Wage Price Index) to CPI.”

This is a big deal. With wage increases at record lows and federal government policies that look like making it worse, inflation is eating away at workers’ real incomes.

Trevor Campbell given life membership

Retired BCC bus driver Trevor Campbell has been awarded life membership of the RTBU.

78-year old Trevor retired from driving four years ago, but that hasn’t stopped him continuing his activism for worker causes. It is only natural for someone who has been a strong unionist all their life.

“What really used to annoy me,” starts Trevor, “is people who would always say ‘What has the union done for me lately?’ Well, you don’t call the firefighters to come water your lawn! But every good thing we have; decent uniforms, safety, leave, penalty rates—they were fought for and won by people who came before us.”

Trevor was always involved in union business, whether it was as a depot delegate, as Vice President of the RTBU, a member of Branch Council, or at times when the rubber really hits the road, like the wildcat strike in 2003.

“It’s very important to get involved,” said Trevor. “We need to look out for each other.”

Changes at Brisbane City Council

Graham Quirk resigned as Brisbane Lord Mayor in March 2019. The new LNP Mayor is former Transport Committee Chairman, and “good friend” of the RTBU and Bus Drivers everywhere, Adrian Schrinner.

Mr Schrinner’s replacement as Chair of the Transport Committee was going to be Ryan Murphy (Councillor for Chandler Ward) but as he only lasted a week, the job has now gone to Krista Adams, Councillor for the Holland Park Ward and new Deputy Mayor.



The campaign for safety will not stop until the attacks on drivers do

RTBU members held a rally outside the Mount Gravatt offices of LNP Brisbane City Councillor (BCC) Krista Adams to again demand that the safety of drivers at work is taken seriously by this council.

The rally came just after ANOTHER member was attacked in their workplace. A 66-year-old RTBU member bus driver was robbed and threatened with a tomahawk by a man with his face covered. Closed circuit footage, shown on Channel 7, shows a man in a hooded jumper and fabric across his face, wearing gloves, walk onto the waiting bus at the Forest Lake Interchange. Our member was the only person on board the bus when attacked, which was parked at a bus interchange waiting for the next drive out along the 100 route. The 100 is one of Brisbane’s most dangerous routes, with reports of chroming and other violent and antisocial behavior earlier this year.

Cr Adams, who is the BCC Public and Active Transport Committee chair, has repeatedly tried to blame the state government for the Council’s lack of funding.

“This is the route we have been screaming about all year. They put on extra security then took it away. Now this happens.” said Rail, Tram and Bus Union - Bus Division Secretary Tom Brown.

“After security issues we demanded extra security guards, which we got, but at the end of the financial year they (the council) took that security off,” he said.

Our union calls on the Brisbane City Council to reinstate extra council-funded security guards on the route and install CCTV at Forest Lake Bus Station.



LEFT: RTBU Bus Division members gather outside the offices of LNP Councillor for Holland Park, and Chair of the Public Transport Committee Krista Adams.

The footage shows the offender pushing the bus driver twice before he grabs the cash box, brandishes the tomahawk at the bus driver, and runs—first one way, and then strangely back the other.

Police have appealed to the public for anyone who may have caught dashboard camera footage of the incident.

The member is back at work, but is understandably traumatised by this incident. He continues to put on a brave face.

One physical attack every week happens on Brisbane's bus drivers—and is one attack too many. LNP Councillor Krista Adams—as Chair of the Public Transport Committee—has taken money away from security, is installing thousands of inadequate (cheaper) security screens, and is now crying poor to the state government instead of taking responsibility when one of our members is attacked.

“It’s the responsibility of council to provide a safe workplace for its drivers, but at every opportunity, this LNP Council has chosen to let its employees down,” said Tom Brown.

“We have been calling for full safety screens for drivers, which they have refused to supply. LNP Mayor Schinnerer will look to blame anyone and everyone rather than take action.” □



A still from the CCTV of the attack on a bus driver at Forest Lake on Wednesday night. Police are appealing for witnesses or for dashcam footage of the incident. Picture: Supplied

RTBU and Maurice Blackburn bursaries for education

Children of RTBU members who are commencing or continuing tertiary studies are eligible to apply for one of five \$1,000 bursaries, sponsored by the RTBU Solicitors, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers.

The annual bursary program is designed to help ease the costs of study, and to reward bright minds who are actively pursuing their career goals. The bursary recognises some of the additional needs of students, such as relocation fees for students living regionally or simply to help assist in purchasing textbooks, laptops or other study supplies.

Students can be studying in any field, with previous winners having studied in a wide range of areas such as law, physiotherapy, science, optometry, psychology and fine arts. School leavers, TAFE students and trade apprentices are also encouraged to apply.

Those assessing the applications are looking for the following criteria:

- Academic, sporting or community achievements
- Demonstrated need for the bursary
- Demonstrated passion for their chosen studies, including plans for future career options
- Align with the key core values of justice, tenacity, compassion and fairness

This year's recipients:

This year, Pring Locomotive Driver, Tanya Sigmund's daughter, Jamie, [BOTTOM] was successful in being awarded one of the RTBU Maurice Blackburn Student Bursaries to assist her with ongoing education expenses while studying at James Cook University in Townsville, to become a Nurse.

[BOTTOM LEFT] Lincoln Hardy, son of Michael Hardy from the rail division.

[LEFT] Isabella Bettridge, daughter of Stafford Bettridge from the bus division. □



Matriarch Josie Burke retires

Josie Burke, a strong advocate for women and First Nations workers, and the first female shunter in Australia, is retiring.

Women's Report

After a varied career of 37 years with Queensland Rail (and a just as strong and varied career with her union), RTBU matriarch Josie Burke is calling it quits and taking some very well-deserved time for herself.

Josie was born in Cloncurry in 1961 and started working for Queensland Rail as a cleaner in 1982. From there, Josie moved on to Rail Operator, to Station and Yard Tutor, and now an Operations Coordinator.

Her involvement in union activities has included being a delegate, Cloncurry Sub-Branch Secretary, EBA negotiator, member of the RTBU Women's Campaign Committee and a member of RTBU Branch Council.

But perhaps Josie's greatest claim to fame is that she was **Australia's first female shunter**—gaining her qualifications in 1997. This is a big deal! Josie faced a lot of opposition from workmates and management when she said she wanted to do the shunting course.

"Oh they said the usual stuff," said Josie. "It's too dangerous. You're not strong enough."

"But I proved them all wrong."

Shunting is the process of sorting items of rolling stock into complete trains or the reverse. Shunting can be very dangerous. Not only is there a risk of being run over, but on some railway systems, the shunters have

to get between the carriages to complete coupling and uncoupling.

Fifteen years ago, your union established the RTBU Women's Campaign Committee (WCC) to give women members a voice, a place to raise issues, and a place to campaign and advocate for issues of importance to women workers. Josie was one of the founding members of this committee, representing members from the Northern District.

Unlike other unions, the challenges for the RTBU Women's Committee isn't just the recruitment of women to their union but recruitment to the industry as well.

"I wanted to recruit more women and Indigenous people to the union, but also to the industry as well," said Josie.

It is because of the hard work of members like Josie that Queensland Rail now makes efforts to recruit more women and First Nations workers—but there is still a long way to go for the industry as a whole.

Josie said she always felt valued in the union, as opposed to times at work. "At first I thought I was a valued employee. Then I learnt I was just a number. Now I know the company thinks I am just a commodity. But in the union, I always mattered." □



Carla Jones
Queensland Industrial
Officer and Women's
Officer



LEFT: Josie Burke's achievement as Australia's first female shunter, unionist, and advocate for First Nations workers, is still recognised today. Josie received a special recognition of commitment at this year's Emma Miller Awards.



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