



RTBU EXPRESS

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Operations | Infrastructure | Workshops | Administration



Vik Sharma
Branch Secretary

FIGHT TO PROTECT EFFECTIVE UNIONS

Allegations of criminality within any industry are without doubt worthy of investigation, but the wholesale government takeover of an effective union and all its branches, based on allegations alone, is a bridge too far.

In a world of fake unions and opportunistic politically motivated outfits, against the consolidated power of corporate capital, it will be workers who suffer the breakdown of representation when union power is diluted.

By using the power of the parliament to circumvent previously legislated provisions to force the CFMEU into administration without the scrutiny of the courts, the Federal Government has set a dangerous precedent for other unions. On a more fundamental level, this intervention is a fierce abrogation of natural justice - denying the accused officials their opportunity to defend the vague allegations that have been aired only through the media.

Beyond the dangerous precedent that rushed legislated administration sets for other unions, a road map to ensure subservience to the will of governments and management alike, this intervention continues to show itself as a fierce abrogation of natural justice.

The construction industry has always been renowned for employers and contractors who are fast and loose with both the law and safety requirements. Connections with organised crime and the employment ex-criminals looking for a fresh start should come as no surprise but should

never be placed in the same basket - the construction industry has always been one to support the rehabilitation and equal opportunity of people looking for an honest day's work.

Employers have a responsibility to screen the appointment and engagement of new contractors and employees, including their conduct throughout ongoing operations. It should be noted that this also includes themselves not participating in criminal behaviour which extends to their alleged willingness to bribe the industry.

No doubt more needs to be done to reign in the cowboy behaviour we see across the industry, something the RTBU fights for daily on rail projects, but taking a narrow lens on the union and not employers is simply an opportunistic attack on a union with a reputation for putting members first.

Across the world there are few jurisdictions with workplace health and safety incident records as low as Australia in the building industry. This is unequivocally due to the powerful presence of the CFMEU on-site, holding employers accountable and fighting for what is right. Without the actions of the CFMEU and their women's committee, construction companies would still be refusing to provide toilets for women on site!

Delivering strong wages and conditions for members in a rough and dangerous industry has put a big target on their back and has solidified their outcomes as the envy of many other workers without a strong union by their side.

We all know it takes two to tango. If the CFMEU has been infiltrated by criminals, then the logic holds that construction companies have also been infiltrated by criminals. Despite this, we have not seen action within the wider industry commensurate with the that taken against the union - a hallmark of union bashing efforts by governments looking to diminish the strength of unions and protect corporate profits.

Placed into administration on the back of media reports making allegations against a handful of people that have not yet been tested in the courts or even investigated by any other relevant regulatory bodies, the rest of the union and its members are being made to suffer weakened representation for the next three to five years.

This is an attack on all of us. As a fighting union who won't kowtow to the wishes of governments and big corporates, we have a duty to stand on the right side of history and challenge the approach taken by the government.



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FIGHT TO PROTECT EFFECTIVE UNIONS CONTINUED

The RTBU will continue to take a strong stand for the justice and representation of workers willing to fight back to get justice at work. We have already done this through representations made by our National Office to the Federal Government and through our attendance at rallies across the country.

A rising tide lifts all boats and working side-by-side with the CFMEU on rail projects has delivered stronger outcomes for all members. Over the years the CFMEU has stood with rail workers time and time again including their attendance marching in numbers with RTBU members at our rallies and stop-work actions in the 2015, 2019 and 2023 enterprise bargaining rounds. The RTBU won't back down from a fight against injustice and will always put the interests of hard working members first.



Vik Sharma

Victorian Branch Secretary



BEWARE SCAMS!

You might have seen on the news that scammers are on the rise.

With so many different ways to trick people, it's likely that you've already been contacted by a scammer.

Members should also be alert to unsolicited requests from individuals claiming to be from their financial institutions or other businesses requesting they update or verify their personal or financial information. Due to the multiple data breaches that have occurred in recent times, scammers are looking to take advantage of these incidents, creating a sense of urgency that you need to do what they say to protect your computer and your financial information.

It is important to note that anyone can be scammed, so all members should be wary of any unsolicited contact that purports to provide assistance, clarify personal information or financial details.

The Federal government through the Scamwatch website provides the following advice:

STOP – Don't give money or personal information to anyone if unsure. Scammers will offer to help you or ask you to verify who you are. They will pretend to be from organisations you know and trust like, Services Australia, police, a bank, government or a fraud service.

THINK – Ask yourself could the message or call be fake? Never click a link in a message. Only contact businesses or government using contact information from their official website or through their secure apps. If you're not sure say no, hang up or delete.

PROTECT – Act quickly if something feels wrong.

Contact your bank if you notice some unusual activity or if a scammer gets your money or information. Seek help from IDCARE and report to ReportCyber and Scamwatch.

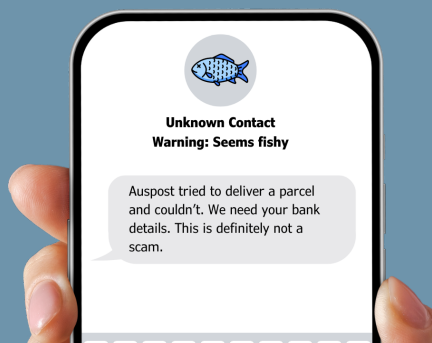
Scams in the workplace

Your workplace is not immune to scams either. During the pandemic, a number of scam unions were established. They provided false information about their registration, their coverage and their ability to represent those who they sucked in to their scam. As one can imagine, once the surface was scratched, these scam unions were correctly identified as the grifters they are.

A scam union will say they can support you. A scam union will say that they can represent you. A scam union will say they can negotiate for you.

At the end of the day, a scam union says a lot but can't deliver. Only the RTBU can bring disputes on your behalf and only the RTBU can represent you in your workplace.

Beware scam unions and the grifters that run them!



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Joe Dennis
Organiser

SAFETY AND PROTECTION ACROSS THE STATE

The last few months have been busy across the industry. Several major projects have had lengthy occupations with hundreds of rail workers on site.

With inland rail taking off and numerous projects still slated for the years ahead, it continues to be a busy time in the industry, something the RTBU remains committed to advocating for into the future.

I have visited many prestarts and work sites, working with all the RTBU shop stewards and delegates to uphold safety and grow union membership.

Several projects have been found to cut corners on safety. Where I have been made aware, they have been held to account.

From expired PPE to unsafe systems of work, these all endanger our members onsite.

The RTBU will not allow employers to jeopardise safety on site. All RTBU members have the right to work in a safe environment and return home to their families safely. We will continue to enforce this right!

Working with the team of delegates and shop stewards, we will continue to engage all sites and conduct safety inspections in order to maintain the highest level of safety for you all.

The RTBU continues to be a powerhouse on rail projects. This continues to be recognised on the job and has resulted in

continuous membership growth.

Members have continued to show interest in becoming more active within the union. This assists in maintain conditions and safety onsite. We are strongest when we work as a big team.

We have also progressed negotiations for several enterprise agreements in both labour hire and safeworking. A number of additional agreements means better coverage across the industry, along with the renegotiation of expiring agreements, locking in pay rates and conditions for the future.

If you have any issues or want to arrange a prestart or site visit, please call me on 0403 863 869





Darren Galea
Divisional Secretary

NEW ENTERPRISE AGREEMENTS PROVIDE TOOLS TO FIGHT BACK

V/Line has recently failed to consult with the RTBU when replacing or changing stations roles, which goes against our new Enterprise Agreement (EA).

In Kyneton, V/Line attempted to reclassify a SM4 role into an SO1 position without consulting affected employees or the RTBU.

We are investigating whether this proposal breaches other clauses in the Agreement and will expand this dispute if necessary.

V/Line has also violated the Internal Recruitment and Transfers clauses by replacing a full-time role with two part-time positions at Winchelsea, impeding Members' right to transition roles. We have placed the matter into dispute.

The RTBU has taken action to ensure the status quo is applied to both changes and

has demanded that V/Line start a renewed consultation process as required by our EA.

We are fighting hard to protect your rights and ensure that all necessary processes are followed. We will continue to update Members as the situations unfold.

If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to reach out to Organisers or Delegates.



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