

No.160

Aug. - Sept. 2018

Sparks

THE RANK-AND-FILE TRANSPORT WORKERS' PAPER

RTBU ELECTION 2018

**YOUR VOTE
IS
YOUR
VOICE**

**BE HEARD MAKING THE
FUTURE, NOT ASKING HOW IT
HAPPENED.**

POSTAL BALLOT SEPTEMBER 3-24
ATTENDANCE BALLOT SEPTEMBER 20

NSW Rail News;

Vic. Rail News;

Commuter Rally;

Bus Driver Collective Letter;

Rorts in the Union Office;

The One Last Spin;

Sydney Buses News;

International News;

EDITORIAL

Welcome to another edition of Sparks.

Earlier in the year, a one day strike over Rail EBA 2017 was called off. Following the decision of the Fair Work Court to declare it illegal. Conveniently, for the Rightwing ALP officials of the RTBU, during an election period, recently the Fair Work Court has “allowed” some token industrial action by track maintenance workers. Secretary Claassens in his talking to the media about the reason for calling off the strike and the Fair Work Court decision, he unctuously referred to “always obeying the law of the land”. However was there another side of the story? In this edition we blow the lid off shocking, massive rorts in the union office. (See article page 4.) These rorts must be seen as a major factor in the many sell-outs of jobs, conditions and cave-ins to privatisation over the years. The EBA also opened the doors to the rapid carve-up of the NSW railways for privatisation with the “Transmission of Business” and “Facilitation” clauses. Claassens and the media were ominously silent about the ramifications of these clauses. (See article page 3.)

In the Sydney Buses the most important news lately is of course the privatisation of Region 6. In this edition, we throw new light and raise questions on the role of the STA and the NSW Govt. in smoothing the way for Transit Systems takeover. (See articles pages 10 and 24.) We throw new light on likely fare increases down the road associated with the privatisation. (See article page 6.) Meanwhile the Transit Systems takeover is worsening the jobs of drivers remaining in the STA. (See article page 10.)

Sparks welcomes contributions in the shape of poems, articles and cartoons by transport workers. Please send to Sparks PO Box 92 Broadway 2007 NSW or via our website www.sparksweb.org

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N.S.W. RAILWAY NEWS

WE MUST TAKE UP THE STRUGGLE AGAINST PRIVATISATION

The failure to fight against Privatisation, in any meaningful way, is a failure for the whole of humanity. The things we take for granted, the things that make our lives bearable, like clean water, shelter, uncontaminated food, convenient public transport, reliable utilities such as energy, health care, affordable education and some senses of equality/egalitarianism are all being pulled from under our feet. The rug of security has been pulled from under us revealing the dirty unkempt floor that has always existed underneath. We are all at risk from a system that is imploding.

For the 1% who benefit from privatisation there are no real world problems, they can afford to manage on their own. For the rest of us, life is a constant struggle, where a life a servitude and begging is required to put food on the table and a smile on our offspring.

When State assets are sold off we are told that services and goods will be cheaper, more reliable, more efficient, and better value for money. In almost all cases the exact opposite is the true.

Privatised Transport in Victoria requires huge subsidies just to continue functioning yet the system is constantly criticised by commuters for being late and unreliable. In the first 8 years since Metro took over Melbourne's public transport \$10 billion was paid in the form of public subsidies. This is a rough equivalent amount that it would have taken the Government to run the system over the same period. Yet, despite massive subsidies to the private operators customer satisfaction is at an all time low, safety standards have been compromised, failures of maintenance, service reductions, and accidents have been at an all time high. In this same period \$350 million has flowed out of the country in the form of profits.

The privatisation of electricity around Australia produced the same devastating results. Despite us being told by Governments that electricity privatisation would cause prices to tumble consumers are paying on average 44% more on their bills than they were 10 years ago. At the same time the number of asset failures and breakdowns has risen exponentially. Figures for the Victorian privatisation show that from 2011 to 2013 there was a 103% increase in failures in distribution from 1119 failures to 2269. The result is a less reliable system at greater cost. That is the legacy of wanton privatisation that is about transferring public wealth to private profits. It doesn't work for us.

If we want a future where we provide for ourselves then we will have to fight for it. The union movement as a whole must embrace this fight otherwise they also have no future. The fight is no easy task as it means building democratic movements in the workplaces and in affected communities, a massive movement across broad layers of people who clearly reject privatisation and embrace re-nationalisation (putting people's assets back in public hands.)

Privatisation is not just an attack on communities it is an attack on the workers who work in the industry. That's why fighting privatisation is Union business.

See Page 22

Spotlight on Rorts in the Union Office

Is there an agenda of the Right-wing ALP machine officials in the RTBU to roll the NSW Branch into the National union completely? In 2014 the building in Redfern which the branch owned and the National office along with the NSW Bus Division and other tenants occupied, was transferred to the National office which then collected the rent and moved to Trades Hall where they pay rent. This is a huge transfer of assets away from the members of the NSW branch which still pays \$830,000 pa capitation fees to the National Office and \$64,000 pa affiliation fees to the ALP. The NSW branch appear also to have adopted the black and white logo of the National office. Strictly speaking there was NSW Branch executive involvement in the decision. However, it was organised outside of the executive and then presented at the executive meeting as a fait accompli. It was not discussed at the branch council prior. The Redfern building was given a book price of \$3.5 million. A nice gift to the National office.

These tactics all play to gerrymander the voting process and disenfranchise NSW members.

Tony Brightwell
Managing Director
Sydney Area, Australia
Previous Association

8 people have endorsed Tony for Print Management

Darryl J.
Chief Operating Officer at Sydney Showground
Sydney Area, Australia

Ken S.
General Manager at Pacific Palms Recreation Club
Sydney Area, Australia

Alex C.
Branch Secretary at Rail, Tram & Bus Union
Sydney Area, Australia

Francine Todd (nee Brightwell)
Admin / Customer Service at API Foils Pty Ltd

Bri Steck
Partner/COO Night School 4 Girls. Partner BTU Gits & News

Alex Claassens
Branch Secretary at Rail, Tram & Bus Union

Experience

Managing Director
Brightset Printing
January 1996 – Present (19 years)

Planner Retoucher
Associated Lithographers
January 1974 – November 1978 (4 years 11 months)

Why? Remember the 'Federal intervention in the BLF' back in the 1970's? Norm Gallagher's Federal Office intervened and set up a rival State branch in NSW, that took over and ran the NSW Branch and legally appointed their federally-controlled local union officials. (For the record Steve Black replaced the Munday-Owens-Pringle NSW leadership in a hostile take-over. We are not suggesting here that the National office in the RTBU is hostile. On the contrary, the takeover is to entrench NSW RTBU officials that are loyal to the Right-wing

ALP machine and make it harder for any “reform” ticket in the current elections to dislodge the incumbents). Does this new arrangement mean that the Federal Office can annul the results of the current State RTBU election if it doesn’t go their way?

A second “rort” is the fact that a clique of loco division officials are released on “Secondment” to work in the union office on a rotating basis. Effectively providing a full-time employee in the office at the railway’s expense. This might lead a reasonable person to think the managers who facilitate these releases could expect favourable treatment from certain union officials.

A third “rort” relates to Union manipulation of paid staff positions. When a very popular and experienced organiser was eased out of the job. The position was left vacant. Eventually it was filled by the nephew of a senior official.

The same goes for the Sydney and Newcastle Buses. State Transit helps fund union organisers, but the NSW RTBU laugh about this because management do not seem to realise they are doing it. Nevertheless the Bus Division of the NSW RTBU “compensate” State Transit for their “generosity”? How else can we explain the carefully manipulated sell-out of Area 6 buses to privatisation?

A fourth “rort” is where the old TV show “Cooking with Kerr” has been replaced by “Cooking with Claassens”? It involves the question as to why are RTBU NSW Branch finances audited, and reports supplied, on their website, but no breakdown of individual rail, bus and tram Divisional Finances found within the provision of these regular financial reports? In particular, the ‘Bus Drivers Traffic Fine and Picnic Fund’. Why have none of the surpluses of this fund which has existed for decades ever been paid to Bus Drivers as a premium or refund? Why has no regular financial reports of this fund been supplied to members? When was the last time the Bus Drivers had a picnic? What happened to the former Bus Union’s “strike fund” when it was rolled into the RTBU under amalgamation?

A fifth “rort” is in the capitalist media. For the period 2011-12 to 2015-16, the RTBU received the overall sum of \$854,043 from the bosses via contributions to a training fund. Why has this money been accepted from the bosses? What was this money really spent on by the union hierarchy? What financial report has been supplied to members regarding these funds and its expenditure? (See “Unions ‘Skim’ \$130m from Worker Funds” by Simon Benson, The Australian 7/9/17 via Google search).

A sixth “rort” involves the RTBU, and other unions as well, where union officials draw a large stipend for being on their members Super Fund Board. However, Claassens has stated publicly and for the new auditing process that any remuneration received from the Super Fund position is declared. It is in effect donated to the Union. There is still a conflict of interest in the fact that part of his retainer from State Super finds its very way into the union.

So we have a NSW Branch Secretary who in this term has:

Taken \$5,000 from a TWU slush fund, according to Crikey.com. He explained to the Executive that it was used to pay for election material used at the last election. When he went to pay

it back, the accounts had already been frozen by the Inquisition - The Liberal's Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption. This is illegal. As an unpaid debt can be called a donation and donations over \$1000 should be declared. See www.ozpolitic.com/forum/YaBB.pl?num=1448477660

Taken a trip to Israel in 2015 at the expense of a Zionist gun dealers lobbyist (linked with former Right Wing ALP politician Mary Eassen) and never declared it to members or explained what benefit the members gained. Yet the RTBU helps finance Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA which in turn helps finance the Palestine Resistance. What is the position of the RTBU on the Palestine issue? Was the State Secretary acting contrary to the Union position on the issue? See "Israel's ALP fan lobbies for arms maker" by John Lyons The Australian 12:00AM March 16, 2016 and Trade Unionists report Israel Visit www.jwire.com.au/trade-unionists-report-on-israel-trip/email/

Uses his position as NSW RTBU Branch Secretary to endorse the business Brightset Printing through Tony Brightwell's Linked-in page. This is the company that prints and mails his election material and that of other Right-wing ALP candidates. See reproduced Link-in page.

If you would like the absolute proof of what an incompetent person he is Google Alan Jones and Alex Claassens interview.

In the case of the Election Consulting Group which conducts RTBU NSW Rail EBA postal ballots, according to its Director Debra Pittman, the company employs former Employees of the AEC (Australian Electoral Commission). According to hearsay evidence, the AEC was involved in the rigging of the 2014 RTBU elections. See article "NSW Railway News" in Sparks No.151 Mar.- April 2015 on Web Site www.sparksworld.org

Commuters Maintain Vigilance Over Privatisation

There were 30-40 at the meeting outside the entrance of Leichhardt Depot on Sunday 1/7/18, organised by STOP (Sydney Transport-users Opposing Privatisation) . Jamie Parker Greens M.P. spoke at the Rally. He raised an interesting point re Transit Systems takeover of Region 6. Currently in Australia, passengers only contribute 20% of cost of buses - in London it is over 55% and Europe 40%. He argued under privatisation the pressure will come from Transit Systems to raise the fare contribution from consumers towards the overall costs to make our system "internationally competitive". He said a previous Liberal Govt introduced the "zonal-system" of breaking Sydney up in to "Areas" of operation.

This enabled the State Govt to call for "tenders" for each "package" of "area of operation" (whether public dept or private operator in charge) after the expiry of a 5,10 or 20 year contract. (However in the case of the Region 6 tendering, the STA was not allowed to tender.) For example the Govt may offer a \$200 million allocation from Govt revenue to run buses over say Area 6. The tender winner is the one who offers the best service. If their costs run

higher than the subsidy offered, the company meets the difference (e.g. if it budgets \$30 mill for wages, but workers are compensated \$40 mill because of unanticipated or unbudgeted overtime, then the company must pay the difference. Similarly if the company cuts services, increases fares or short-changes drivers on pay entitlements, to cut their costs below the intended \$200 mill outlaid by the Govt, then this is an increase in profit distributed to shareholders and management through Executive bonuses, etc).

So there will be pressure on Govt to raise fares in next few years - as the company can say other countries have much large passenger contributions. Also mentioned an ALP Govt. would not renew Transit Systems contract if in office but Luke Foley was ambiguous about reversing privatisation during the course of the current Region 6 contract. Could point to hidden nasties in the contract with Transit Systems. Such as a penalty clause involving say \$100 mill. in case of discontinuing of the contract.

At the protest there was a blockade of 8-10 people at the depot entrance. 3 buses were stopped for a few minutes as a token effort to make a point. However the cops were called by the company bosses, after a report from a driver. A group of them suddenly came out of the Admin building when the

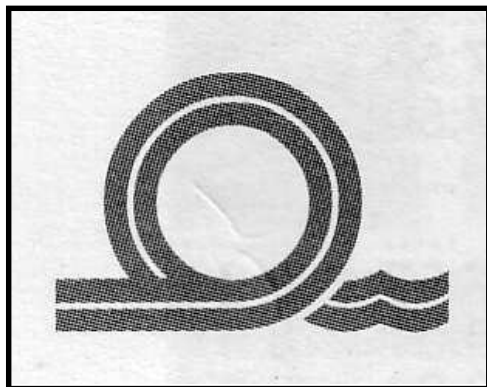


blockade started. Jamie Parker mentioned that the company is very scared of the public campaign against the privatisation. They have only put a small logo on the buses and failed to shift in their fleet of private buses from the Fairfield and Smithfield depots. It looks like they are too frightened to use their old bomb buses from the West in Region 6 due to a potential passenger backlash. However despite Transit Systems saying they have the full complement of drivers and claimed they flew many of the Adelaide and Perth drivers back home as surplus to needs, the public are curious whether the crash training course will be sufficient for the imported Kiwi drivers. Questions have been raised whether the State Govt is subsidising all the interstate and overseas recruits. Who is paying the plane fares and accommodation and resettlement costs? What about the safety and speed of training implementation? Will the details of a trainee driver fatally hitting a Transit Systems staff trainer last month be made public?

Although this rally was small, the over-reaction by Transit Systems in calling the police has not gone un-noticed. The media did not turn up although the local press have followed the post-privatisation period extensively calling for more commuter feed-back. No one from the ALP State Conference turned up despite over 500 flyers handed out at the lunch break at the Sydney Town Hall. The RTBU delegates to the ALP event were all informed but disappeared quickly (in shame?) rather than discuss the issue with activists. Clearly the Eastern Suburbs are next to face the privatisation chop with many cross-city runs now operating. The State ALP Opposition see their electoral chances enhanced for the March 2019 election and are ac-

tive at a local Govt area, especially over the removal of the Bronte to City 378 route. Commuters should be wary they are not betrayed the way those in the inner-west were by ALP Mayoral indifference and Union leaders selling the workers short by caving in to Fair Work Commission bans of strike action.

Contributed by a Participant



The One Last Spin

In the evening of Tuesday 13th February 2018 following NSW Transport Minister Constance announcement of the winning tender for Region 6 going to Transit Systems, festivities were organised by Constance to celebrate. It was to be held at the Willoughby Mini Casino formerly known as the Willoughby Hotel, in the High Rollers section of its VIP room in Gladys Electorate and near her home. It was to include a sultry, risqué drivers' conditions "stripper" performance to be orchestrated by Peter Rowley former STA CEO and now a Transit Systems consultant with the assistance of a troupe of scantily well intentioned union impersonators. Attired in the flimsy seven veils of duplicity. However, Rowley was held up by an accident and the performance was postponed.

In place a very tacky video of scenes from the "smoke and mirrors" bogus "Save Our Buses" campaign choreographed by Mark Morey Secretary of Unions NSW and Chris Preston Union Bus Division Secretary was shown. Featuring a guest performance by Luke Foley NSW ALP Leader outside Ryde Depot attended by a few local ALP hacks with a video production team for his upcoming state election campaign. Jodi McKay NSW ALP MP also starred peddling duplicitous promises in a meeting at Burwood Depot. The video received a hostile response from the crowd of company bosses, Liberal Pollies and faceless Transport for NSW bureaucrats for the lack lustre performance of its stars. One boss even yelled out to Morey, "With all that CIA money Unions NSW is rolling in, you could have done a more believable performance!" The drivers weren't fooled.

Gladys with her Neo-Liberal “muse” Constance perched on her knee and whispering the latest corporate buzz words in her ear, assembled Lib pollies, big bosses and the Union and UNIONS NSW executive members who had just crept in via the “tradesmen entrance”, were now anxious to have some fun with pokie gambling.

Gladys took the lead in the gambling frenzy, intoxicated with the smell of Corporate money and a sense of urgency with the March 2019 NSW elections on the horizon. It was all devil may care, do as much as possible now with the NSW Budget. She pulled the lever on one of the old style pokies. Three Light Rail vehicles spun up. With the warning lights flashing you owe a further \$1 Bill. With another pull three tollways flashed up. Again bright red lights flashed warning of further billions owing for the concrete and construction companies after the initial \$2.6 Billion NSW Budget allocation for the F6 and M5. Constance then tried his luck and three Metros spun up. With the warning this project will be billions over budget, but billions for real estate developers and multimillions squandered on duplicating stations. Nola Watson, President of the NSW Chamber of Business was next to try her hand and three pay rolls spun up on her machine. Warning lights flashed up “Threshold for Pay Roll Tax to be increased to \$1 Million in the NSW Budget for the big end of town”. Chris Preston and Mark Morey got into the swing of things and had a spin. Three ALP Seats in the NSW Parliament flashed up on their machines for services rendered to the ALP Godfathers, Libs and Corporate Rich for deluxe controlling and bamboozling workers over privatisation and weakening unions.

These pokies which the pollies, big bosses and their helpmates were playing, were rigged to win. Unlike the pokies for the rest of us in the state of NSW. It has the heaviest concentration of pokies in the world resulting in much heartache and havoc for pokie addicts.

Sydney Buses News

Randwick Depot News

Sparks: How is the situation in the STA in light of the NSW Govt’s privatisation push?

Randwick Driver: The atmosphere at State Transit is toxic, and imploding, regardless. Transit Systems, the private company that won Region 6 at tender, is not only advertising overseas for drivers, it’s head-hunting and poaching STA managers to run its acquisition. So there’s upward pressure on salaries at management level, and “screw-you” downward pressure on drivers’ wages down here at Slater level.

There’s palpable pandemonium and paranoia among management ranks at Sydney Buses. No sooner does Furball announce his “A-team” of Depot Managers, (“A” coming in with a very good odds as meaning “Arsehole”), than they’re being poached in whisper-quiet behind-the-scenes deal-making. In the same week (just two weeks ago – early May) that our

brand new Randwick Depot manager was escorted off the premises by Security for taking up a Transit Systems offer to manage Tempe Depot instead.

All this helps you visualise the anarchic death-throes and desperation inside Furball's STA as he attempts to choreograph and stage-play the necessary pretence of the organisation's ongoing survival, while little more than Constance and

his penthouse suite of TfNSW acolytes actually hold the rudder of this ship-wreck destined juggernaut. There's abject terror and panic up on deck, - everyone's running around with one eye on the lifeboats, and one eye on everyone and anyone else who might represent a threat to their chances of being in one.



"Okay, the final step says to dismantle the whole thing and ship the jobs overseas."

Port Botany Depot News

Sparks: What's the latest with the ramifications of Region 6 privatisation for the depot?

Pt. Botany Driver: In late June 17 drivers transferring to the depot from Inner West depots facing privatisation came to the depot and were told by the depot manager that their transfers wouldn't be accepted and they had to return to their depots of origin. The union went to the Fair Work Court and obliged management to reverse the decision. In the lead up to Region 6 privatisation, management then wanted regular drivers at the depot to go on loan to the Inner West depots. We threatened to take sickies and the bosses backed off again. Then all trainee drivers with less than a week or two on the job at the depot were being shanghaied and sent on loan to the Inner West depots to help out with driver shortages. Drivers have also been particularly angry about a stack of brand new buses kept on ice at the depot. These buses were all transferred to Region 6 depots prior to privatisation, so that Transit Systems, the new operator would look good with its fleet when the company took over.

Waverley Depot News

Sparks: What's the situation with management at the depot lately?

Waverley Busie: Selina is still depot manager. Jim Narkos former depot manager who was rumoured to be replacing Selina in the job has now been transferred to a plum middle management job at STA Head Office. The STA is constantly training up new drivers. Whilst removing all excess drivers. The way the STA is operating it seems designed to get rid of the older drivers. In particular, long time drivers are complaining about the monotonous short runs they are being obliged to work. Making working at the depot less attractive. The bosses are going deep into the flesh with cutbacks. People are realising how blatant and brutal the bosses have become. However, there is a general lack of comradeship amongst drivers. Other news is that there is a reduction in gas buses with the loss of the Volvo gas buses. Whilst we are receiving a stack of new Mercedes Bendies. With these larger buses, the bosses need less drivers. Seems in line with a management plan to create a smaller workforce at the depot. The introduction of the new bendies, is in stark contrast to management policy over recent years to rundown infrastructure.

Sparks: How are drivers finding the job since the November timetable and route changes?

WB: The depot has been hard hit with the changes as those depots targeted for immediate privatisation such as Leichhardt and Burwood have been favoured with the lucrative runs. Whilst Waverley has now less lucrative routes such as the 379 from Nth Bondi to Bronte and less city runs. Drivers are feeling unhappy and alienated in their jobs.

Sparks: How are developments with the Light Rail?

WB: The Govt. is squandering \$3.5 billion on the Light Rail extensions in the Eastern Suburbs. They hope to re-coop the expenditure by selling off the Eastern Suburbs buses with the Light Rail as a package when the extensions are finally completed. Most drivers believe at that time, the contract for the package will be signed off. If the extensions completion wasn't being delayed by a further 12 months, I believe the package would have been sold off with Region 6 depots. Drivers are feeling a sense of suspense with their jobs stemming from the overhanging privatisation axe.

Sparks: What is the latest with the NSW Govt. foul ups, and secretive decision making?

WB: According to an ABC news radio program on 8/6/18 I was listening to and also a recent article in the SMH, as a result of the new interurban trains to be built in South Korea being too wide for the tracks, tunnels and platforms in the Blue Mts. where it will operate, there is going to be a major cost blow out. The Govt. had been enticed into buying the trains on the basis of a 25% discount. Making the price lower for the trains, than that offered by Australian manufacturers. However the overall cost associated with all the renovations to the above infrastructure to cope with the trains, means that the final cost will be \$3.9 Billion. This amount will greatly exceed the 25% discount. Now the NSW Govt. is patching up a bad decision and squandering more budget money. Another foul up of the Govt. has been the decision to close the Banks-town Line for 2 month periods each year during the construction for the Metro. As a result of a storm of community complaints they have backed down on the closure. Now the construction work has been changed so that most of the 13km of rail track on the line remains intact instead of shifting it or laying new track as with the original Govt. plan. As a result the periods the line needs to be closed has been greatly reduced. The real agenda of the Liberals behind the project

is for developers such as Meritons to gain access to the land around stations for high rise units. Whilst the Govt. expects to make billions with stamp duty on apartment sales. The building of high rise units around the stations will further densify the city. It will contribute to a glut of units in the city in 3 years time. Effectively the Govt. is juggling balls and squandering money to patch up mistakes to help out its business mates.

The secrecy and profiteering hidden agendas of NSW have been exposed again with the recent announcement of its decision to increase the height of the Warragamba Dam wall by 14 metres. The construction will entail an amazing amount of concrete for alleged safety reasons. Supposedly to avoid the likelihood of a one in a hundred years flood. In reality, 14-15 years ago, the dam wall was already increased to cope with any floods. It's irresponsible for the Govt. to allow housing construction in a flood plain. It should not be allowed. An earthquake could destroy the dam wall with disastrous effects. Would you live in a flood plain? In South Australia in 1980, there was a massive flood in the Barossa Valley caused by the backup of water on a ridge from a dam construction which spread along old creek beds which were built up with housing.

Another example of the Liberals' irresponsibility, was highlighted with a TWU organised convoy of trucks through Sydney on Sunday 15/7/18 and in other capital cities, demanding the reintroduction by the Federal Govt. of a road safety watchdog to improve safety for drivers and pressure companies to cease imposing unrealistic deadlines and underpaying drivers.

Sparks: What are your impressions of the “Smoke and Mirrors” techniques used by the NSW Govt. in pushing through its development schemes?

WB: This technique has been particularly displayed in regard to the “community consultations” over the Light Rail in the Eastern Suburbs and the Power House Museum. In the case of the former, a public meeting was held but no politicians attended and only a model of the Light Rail extensions was provided with an engineer from the Light Rail construction company. In the case of the latter, at the public meeting about the Power House, local people's participation was cut out as only 3 minutes was allowed for comments and questions. In the case of a proposed detox centre in Dubbo for mainly aboriginal people in the area. The NSW Govt. sent out a slanted questionnaire to local people which resulted in an overwhelming no vote and so the Govt. could find an excuse not to construct the centre.

Sparks: What are your thoughts on the Liberal's Westconnex tollways construction?

WB: Australia has the highest tolls in the world. With many workers from the far Western suburbs in Sydney facing spending the incredible amount of \$3,500 pa for tollway use to travel to and from work. Now the NSW Govt has a new scheme which allows free car registration for tollway “customers” to use that neo-liberal buzz word, spending \$25 a week or more on tolls – the equivalent of over \$1300 a year. However it only applies in selective cases. If you hire or lease a car, the exemption does not apply. Even if you own a car, it may not apply. Needless to say only a fraction of the toll cost is reduced. In Spain there has been a major revolt by motorists over the tollways. With few using the tollways according to a recent ABC Radio programme. Funnily enough despite the end of car manufacturing in Australia, the excise tax on imported luxury cars continues.

Leichhardt Depot News

Sparks: What is the situation with privatisation?

Leichhardt Driver: There were no mass resignations following the takeover by Transit Systems. However there has certainly been some retirements amongst the old timers from 1/7/18. One of those veterans of the STA who will be retiring in August is Peter Santos, the depot Charge man. In the lead up to privatisation there continued to be a great shortage of drivers with everyone working DOC's. The new operator will be transferring some of its fleet from its depots out in the West to Leichhardt. However, whether these buses are of the same quality as STA buses is unclear. We are very conscious that the new operator will be after our extra week of sick leave. However according to the union our existing on-the-job conditions will remain in place for 18 months. Other news is that Peter Rowley former STA CEO and former STA senior manager Jamie Sinclair will be employed as consultants for Transit Systems for Region 6 rather than as managers. There is now a general consensus amongst us that the union hierarchy and the ALP sold us out over the privatisation.

**WARNING OF SCAM
DETECTED IN YOUR AREA!**

**THIS SCAM IS DANGEROUS &
CAN LEAD TO BUS
ACCIDENTS & DAMAGE TO
THE PUBLIC.**

**IT INVOLVES AN OFFER OF
\$5,000 FOR MEETING
UNREALISTIC BUS RUNNING
TIMES & EXPECTATIONS.**

**If you see any more of these
scams. Google this Web Site:
www.scamwatch.gov.au/ &
report details.**

Sparks: What is the impact at the depot of the privatisation?

Leichhardt Driver1: Latest news is that 70 drivers are transferring from the depot to Transit Systems depots out West near where they live. Whilst in mid June 10 to 20 new drivers are coming to the depot. With the lack of old timers on the job, there looks to be considerable problems with training new drivers. Latest news is that throughout Region 6 a ban has been imposed by the STA on transfers. If you wanted to transfer, you had to resign. With only 15 drivers at a time which can be trained at the depot, and existing transfers, it's looking like a real crisis of bus operations is looming with privatisation.

Sparks: How is the situation since privatisation?

Leichhardt Driver2: All the transfers have gone through. Otherwise there has been minimal change. The only difference between the STA and Transit Systems regarding Holidays is that whilst both provide 5 weeks recreational leave per year, with Transit Systems you can cash-out your 5th week of recreational leave. There is no evidence of trainee drivers from STA depots coming here. **STOP PRESS It appears that a deal may have been done between the RTBU and TWU leadership over coverage of workers of Transit Systems in Region 6.**

As intriguingly in the media the TWU rather than the RTBU is being consulted on the implementation of privatisation. Is the RTBU membership in Region 6 aware of this.? Will members have to resign from the RTBU and join the TWU? What will be the situation with continuing entitlements?

VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS

In this issue of Sparks we will discuss the standing down of a Senior Union Official of the Locomotive Division. In this issue Drivers, Conductors and Station Staff will discuss these charges. As in previous issues of Sparks names have been changed.

Sparks: Why has the Union Official been stood down?

Rastus: He was stood down because, he is alleged to have threatened the woman who manages the Drivers.

Clarence: Not that Moron again.

Roscoe: Yes it is.

Abner: This Moron caused a fair amount of trouble at Ballarat. They were glad to see her go.

Rastus: The reason the official has been stood down is because V/Line Management wants to send a message to Train Drivers that Union Officials can be gotten rid off.

Roscoe: He was not stood down over the recent moves to alter the EBA?

Rastus: He was stood down over an incident relating to a Manpower Clerk. In other areas of V/Line, they are known as Staff Clerks. In the 1980's, the Drivers' Rostering was changed to Manpower. By 2018 Manpower Spencer Street rosters all Passenger Drivers around the State.

Roscoe: This woman had it in for one of the Manpower Clerks. After being on the job a couple of months, she said that this Clerk's job was unsatisfactory. She had no proof of this.

Rastus: You see another Manpower Clerk was returning from Maternity Leave and she wanted his position. You see the position he worked was a day shift.

Roscoe: The Union Official when he heard she was trying to terminate him, defended him and told this woman that she was destroying the Manpower Clerk's livelihood. She didn't care as you can see what happened up at Mildura. There was a heated exchange and the Delegate said that Solicitors would be brought in.

Rastus: She insinuated that she was being threatened and he was stood down. He was made to hand back his Driver's Keys, so it was obvious they were going to sack him.

Roscoe: On hearing he was stood down, there was anger amongst the Drivers. A number of Drivers wanted immediate industrial action. This is illegal during a period of the EBA.

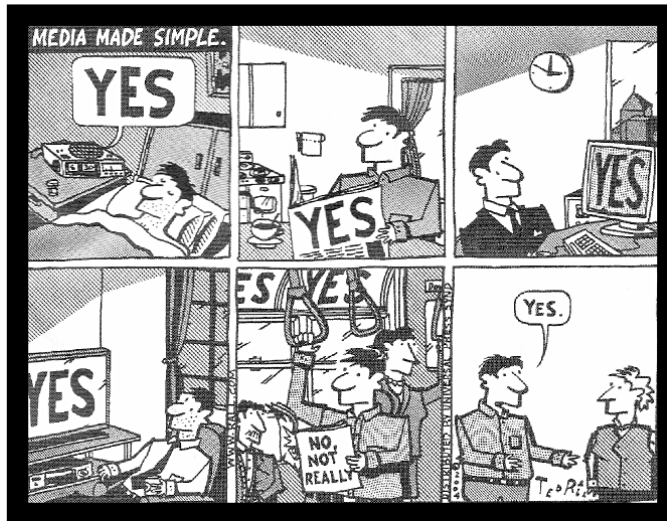
Jethro: Didn't V/Line try to break the EBA?

Clarence: Yes, but it was defeated.

Rastus: As this issue of Sparks is being compiled two months has passed and the matter is unresolved. The union wants to know what charges the Delegate is facing. V/line will not reply.

Roscoe: The union has been to Fair Work Australia to settle the matter, but V/Line still will not reply. So it looks like the case may lead to the Federal Court.

Roscoe: Court cases cost a fair amount of money from union funds which has to be diverted from funds used to help members. This is a tactic used by V/Line to try to cripple the union in legal fees. That is why a legal levy was introduced into the union dues.



Abner: The Union Delegate has support of all of V/Line Unionists. Most members say if he is knocked off, then what is stopping V/Line going after all of the Union Delegates.

Roscoe: She maybe a moron but she is an educated moron who has been sent through the employers training colleges. Before she came to V/Line she was a very high up in a retail chain.

Sparks: What is this rumour that V/Line has a slush fund to cover Unfair

Dismissal Claims?

Clarence: Rumours have it that this fund is used to pay out employees who claim Unfair Dismissal if it is settled in the employee's favour.

Abner: They do not want these people back in the job. Six years ago V/line paid a conductor they wanted to get rid of \$50,000 to upgrade her teaching skills. So she could resume teaching.

Sparks: What is this I hear that Authorised Officers have been used to monitor trains to see if there has been illegal industrial action.

Clarence: A couple of times Authorised Officers who should be out patrolling trains have been used to see if conductors are arriving at their trains less than 15 minutes before departure.

Abner: The union has put a stop to this action.

Arlene: We have also observed people from Head Office particularly Human Resources and Managers monitoring the trains to see if there is any industrial action.

Sparks: I hear two booking clerks have been stood down.

Clarence: You are correct. They have been stood down over some issue with Email. The union has taken up their case and this may be heading to the courts.

Jethro: The shifts the clerks worked have not been covered. The Booking Office is two staff members down. What V/Line is playing at is they want to find some issue to sack them.

Sparks: Once again we have run out of space. V/Line does not care how much money they waste as long as they obtain a result, which suits them. The standing down of the Senior Union Delegate is a calculated effort by V/Line to smash the Locomotive Division. It will fail. When these managers depart, the union will be still around.

Rastus and Roscoe: In having the final say, we Drivers will fight any attempt by V/Line to sack any Union Official. As for using Authorised Officers to monitor drivers and conductors it shows how low V/Line can go. Finally we will say to V/Line. You TOUCH ONE, You TOUCH ALL.

STOP PRESS:

As this edition of Sparks goes to press, one of the Booking Clerks who has been stood down was sacked. The Clerk is taking V/Line to Fair Work Australia for Unfair Dismissal and will only accept being reinstated as a Booking Clerk. The rumour about the Driver is different. It has been alleged that Driver has been told to reply to why he shouldn't be dismissed by V/Line. This case may head to the Federal Court. V/Line has no grounds to dismiss him.



In this issue of Sparks we will discuss events at V/Line over the last four months. Again Customer Service Staff, Conductors and Drivers will discuss these events. As in previous issues names have been changed.

Sparks: What has happened at V/Line over the last four months?

Abner: V/Line tried to renegotiate the current EBA.

Sparks: In what way?

Clarence: They tried to get the Membership at V/line to vote on changing the EBA in a phone ballot with a private company.

Rastus and Roscoe: They did not involve Fair Work Australia.

Abner: May we introduce you to Colleen and Cathal who will talk about these issues.

Sparks: What is your position at V/Line?

Colleen and Cathal: We are employed as Conductors and we are fed up with V/Line trying to undermine our working conditions.

Rastus and Roscoe: V/Line wanted to renegotiate the EBA with the Drivers bearing the brunt of the changes to working conditions. One of the examples would be to train shunters to move trains from the yards to the platforms.

Colleen: Most of the membership was puzzled as to why a Marketing Company was to be used to conduct the ballot and not the Australian Electoral Commission.

Cathal: A number of members contacted the union as to why the AEC was not used and the union checked with their legal experts who reported that it was legal. V/Line notified the union of their proposals between Christmas and the New Year.

Sparks: What a low act.

Colleen: What would you expect from V/Line when the CEO is from Metro Trains.

Rastus and Roscoe: He is trying to introduce Metro Trains working conditions to V/Line. In other words Union Busting.

Cathal: Towards the end of the Ballot, V/Line offered all of its workforce a bonus of \$1500 tax free if the Ballot was carried.

Clarence: This was Bribe money and V/Line hoped the members would fall for the Bait.

Jethro: Retired members, interns from the Trades Hall Council and Job Delegates gave up their time to help in contacting all of the membership at V/Line to urge them to vote NO to the changes.

Colleen: The result of the Vote was a resounding NO.

Rastus: 92% of the members voted and the result was 94% No, 5% YES.

Roscoe: It was good to see the management EBA proposal defeated. The respective Union newsletters have reported on the campaign and what we offer in Sparks is a brief summary.

Sparks: I hear a number of employees received letters about being late for work and given veiled warnings about being late in future.

Colleen: You are correct. This is V/line Human Resources showing their true colours to their employees. This is SPITE over losing the EBA votes.

Clarence: Forty employees at Spencer Street were sent these letters and only one was sent to a Country Area. Both Daily Paid and Salaried Staff received these letters.

Cathal: These letters gave a history of employees being late over a four year period.

Colleen: Most employees were late by four to five minutes which has been caused by delayed trains or traffic jams. Most employees when they are delayed phone the Staff Clerks, when they are running late. If they were less than ten minutes late they were not docked.

Abner This changed over five years ago when an instruction from the manager of Spencer Street to dock all employees if they were late was issued. This has been reported in previous issues of Sparks.

Rastus and Roscoe: One employee who gave himself sufficient time to be at work was travelling by V/Line. There was a signal failure on the line he was travelling. The train arrived at Spencer Street a few minutes late. He had notified the Staff Clerk of the delay and that he would be a few minutes late. A number of Drivers were also in this particular train.

Sparks: Was he docked?

Clarence: Yes.

Abner: One employee who had a blemished record was distressed about the letter saying if he was late in future, disciplinary action would be considered.

Cathal: The Staff Clerks should stand up to management and defend employees. Not be a yes man.

Abner: The union was notified and the Union said ignore the letters. The matter will be taken to Fair Work Australia,

Sparks: I hear that two Conductors who were not on the On-the-Job Trainers were appointed to the position of Conductor Service Managers to act in the position while two CSM's were on leave at Spencer Street.

Colleen: You are correct. Two Conductors who were not OJT's were appointed.

Abner: The career path for CSM is Conductor then OJT and then CSM. In country locations when a CSM was on leave an OJT was appointed at Acting CSM.

Cathal: The OJT's at Spencer Street were not considered for the position.

Colleen: A number of Conductors were upset that the job was not advertised and they conducted the Independent Review-Based Anti-Corruption Commission, better known as I.B.A.C.

Abner: You see IBAC protects Whistleblowers, so V/Line is unable to conduct a witch hunt.

Rastus and Roscoe: V/Line is already in trouble with IBAC over a training scheme in South Western Victoria.

Colleen: As a result of Conductors contacting IBAC, one of the Acting CSM was removed from the position.

Abner: Then V/Line pulled a rabbit out of the hat, two OJT positions had been advertised, but the person who represented Human Resources, who was conducting the interviews resigned. The recommendations this person made who were to fill the acting positions were found. Wait for it. The two Conductors who were made acting CSM's were successful are now in the acting CSM position, as they are now OJT's.

Rastus: What a joke. I wonder if this was fabricated. Perhaps IBAC should investigate further.

Sparks: Once again we have run out of space. This is the only time I can remember that an attempt has been made to alter an EBA midway through an agreement and we at Sparks are pleased that the vote was a resounding NO. As for the letters sent to employees being late this is SPITEFUL and should be contested through the Courts. Finally if employees think the selection process for a position is wrong contact IBAC.

Ten ways in which Andrew Constance is physically destroying Sydney and NSW's rail and bus public transport infrastructure.

(From) An open letter to the Rail Division of the RTBU, from a collective of bus driver members of the same union, to demand the sacking of Transport Minister Constance.

Continued from last edition.

PUBLIC RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE ACT OF DISPOSAL No 1:

(Constance's "Trojan Horse")

THE CLOSURE & TEARING UP OF NEWCASTLE'S RAIL LINE.

(in preparation for a private operator taking over all bus services, and building and operating a replacement light rail!)

Act Number One of Trashing the State's hard-won Public Transport Infrastructure, was Constance's and Berejiklian's team act in mindlessly destroying a provincial industrial city's 160 year old seaport rail line.

The destruction of Newcastle's suburban railway line and city terminus, and the dislocation of the Hunter Valley's regional rail destination a few miles out of town at suburban Hamilton, represents the beheading of a vast and stand-alone, rural hinterland to seaport, publicly-owned and built railway infrastructure put together by the toil and taxes of eight generations of progress.

The Newcastle & Great Northern Railway Line, is now bereft of 160 years of purpose, because of Constance's and Berejiklian's recklessly short-sighted devotion to the comparatively temporary prospect of attracting riverfront property development jobs to Newcastle.

Left undisturbed in a dormant resting phase, those hard-won rails down to the Hunter River's mouth would have found doubtless further generations of purpose and advantage had the terrible two of NSW Transport & Infrastructure just closed the rail service for the interim, and left the blood sweat and tears of 160 years of building intact for the Novo Castrian region's self-determined future. The demolition and destruction of such hard-won public assets, is not a vandalistic scandal merely because they are lost heritage items. These were working NSW rail assets, part of this State's existing public transport infrastructure.

Not many would know that Newcastle's railway building actually preceded Colonial Sydney's first act in opening a line to Rosehill at Parramatta, by more than 20 years. Though not a locomotive-hauled line, the privately owned horse drawn tram hauling coal along rail lines along the south bank of the Hunter River, was the precursor of the vast and independent seaport public railway infrastructure that was much later to become "all stations to Newcastle". The year was 1831!

This historical fact is overlooked in the NSW Primary history education syllabus, as it is by the supreme wreckers and vandals of public transport infrastructure currently seated in Parliament House. Millions of Australian and British Pounds sterling, and generations of NSW and

Australian taxpayer's wealth, contributed to this vital second seaport rail system on the NSW coastline that reached over the Great Divide and up the New England Ranges to Queensland, decades before any viable link with Sydney and the rest of NSW's railway colossi could be forged over the tricky engineering feat called "The Hawkesbury".

Of some convenience to those that empower such acts of bastardry as the closure of something as fundamental and integral to the public, common wealth of communities, as was the railway line from Hamilton to Newcastle, the combined cost of assembling such a representative public asset, (the value of which has been evolving for nearly two centuries), can never be calculated.

But just try and contemplate the Herculean scale of wastage of all this past toil and investment,- the untold State Treasuries spent over decade after decade on a railway network that took 50 years to build, and took on the worth of 160 years of public investment in it, just to be instantly vanquished upon the mental vacancy of a government decision to rip off the "neck & head" last 10 kilometres of this vast infrastructure's seaport reach, merely to replace its stoic proportions with a trite light rail, and a lolly-wrapped privatised bus service to more fashionably service the inner city gentrification they want developers to foster in downtown Newcastle. Facile followers of fashion, with friends in profitable places wanting favours, were the motivational ingredients of this vacuous decision making.

This single act of NSW Government public asset infrastructure destruction,- physically destroying the mantelpiece of a region's public rail infrastructure, in order to give enlisted private transport operators and multi-national companies the assurances and confidences they crave that no public competition will ever again be in an easy position to resume operation and threaten their takings, this twin curtain act of the laughless comedy team known as Constance and Berejiklian, will loom large in public transport history as an unbridled obscenity. And this appalling citation has nothing to do with the shameless re-development motivations that made this folly happen.

It's not an accountant's table, but for needless argument's sake alone, ponder the long list of celebratable dates and milestones gathered here from a NSW Transport history website. This lean summary of progress and itemised events in building Newcastle's grand railway system, adds up to something unfetchable,- a weighty sense of the tremendous public costs of countless scales and sources of expenditure that contributed to eight heroic generations of construction and investment that went into the slow creation of the Newcastle region's "Great Northern Railway".

Contemplate the incalculable capital loss represented by eliminating this extensive rail system's convergent last 10 kilometres into its capital city sea-port. Then measure this vastness up against the frail whim of a few years of anticipated apartment construction jobs, and a generation or two of spending (at most) by the residential accommodation and home purchasing of an imported gentrifying middle class. It's like contenting oneself with a car, the motor of which is blowing ceaseless oil, because the vehicle's dashboard has irresistible finery. Such is the abysmal scale of foresight represented by Berejiklian's and Constance's culpable decision-making.

You won't need the cash costings of all these imaginably expensive construction tasks, to digest the contemporary billions and billions of dollars worth of comparative financial input necessary if we were required to build all of this public rail infrastructure again, and in so doing, try and emulate what Transport Minister Constance is today so fond of telling us all he's doing everywhere in Sydney all at the same time, in building Rome, (ie;- "Tomorrow's Sydney"), in the space of a day. *To be continued next edition.*

International Transport News: N.Z. Bus Strike

14/5/18

Bus users in Hamilton are being urged to make alternate transport plans after drivers announced a strike planned for Monday. The strike will affect some Hamilton city bus services operating from 7.30 to 9:30am on Monday, May 14.

Ministry of Education School Bus and Specialised School Transport Assistance services will not be affected. Go Bus was "less than impressed" with First Union's call to strike on Monday morning, giving little notice to passengers, the company said in a statement. It said it was notified of the strike on Sunday morning. "While First Union is focused on its political agenda, which has included numerous recent strike actions across various operators in Auckland, we can assure our passengers in Hamilton that we will do everything we can to cover as many services as possible," Go Bus chief operating officer Nigel Piper said. "We can also assure our passengers that Go Bus has a proud track record of increasing wages beyond the level of inflation, the most recent being a 6.7 per cent increase for Hamilton drivers just last December."

Waikato Regional Council's chief financial officer, Mike Garrett, said council's focus was on minimising the inconvenience to passengers as much as possible.

All regional services – 20 Cambridge, 21 Northern Connector, 22 Morrinsville/Paeroa, 23 Raglan and 24 Te Awamutu – will run as normal. The Orbiter, 4N Flagstaff North, 5 Chartwell, 11 Fairfield, 13 University and 29 Hamilton Gardens, will also run as normal.

The CBD Shuttle service will not operate until 10am. Piper said the company was not opposed to the advocacy for a living wage for bus drivers. "Generally, we would be supportive if a council elected to stipulate a specific wage rate or 'living wage', provided it was applied to all operators with contracts and the cost to move to a higher rate was fully recoverable.

"We are aware that bus driver wages and the concept of a living wage is already being widely discussed by territorial authorities. "We are not opposed to bus drivers being included in these discussions, although we anticipate the matter will require consideration in a wider forum of stakeholders, including government funders, councils, bus companies and bus passengers. "If all were supportive and it was stipulated that bus contractors had to pay the living wage as a minimum, a level playing field could be created across all operators, and we would support that move." In a response, First Union spokesperson Jared Abbott said Go Bus was informed that First Union members would be balloting for strike action at a meeting on March 23.

Continued from page 3 Yet despite this Unions have largely failed or have been half hearted in their fight to stop privatisation. The A.L.P. does not have a specific policy against privatisation and when in power have instituted the same disastrous policies as the Lib/Nat Parties. Union leaders who see themselves aligned to the ALP are an obstacle to building a mass movement that could challenge privatisation. It makes it very difficult to form allegiances when union leaders are more interested in unrealistically preserving the electoral chances of the ALP at the ballot box rather than protecting their members and the community from the wreckers embracing privatisation.

At the Grass Roots level we need to develop new ways of building alliances with the Community and in the Workplaces. We need to look at the problem from the interest of not just ourselves but the Community as a whole. Some of the processes of privatisation are common across industries and across regions. They are similar and we need to be aware of them. We need to challenge these processes as they unfold.

Shedding of Staff

The shedding of staff in public transport has continued unabated for years. In most cases Workshops, Cleaners, Maintenance Workers and Office Workers have been replaced by private contractors. This happens many years ahead of the selloff of the main business. In the case of Sydney Trains this process is well under way. The current shortages of staff in the Train Crew area are directly attributable to this. Of course the provision of services are directly linked to staff shortages and the privatisation project. However many commuters don't make the link between privatisation and poor services, preferring instead to blame "incompetent rail workers" rather than Government policies.

Adding New Management

Old intransigent managers who stand in the way of reforms are replaced with managers from diverse section of the Private Sector. The old bureaucrats are replaced with managers and bean counters from the airline industry, Kentucky Fried Chicken, the prison industry and from other areas of the transport industry and elsewhere. Their sole purpose is to destroy the old culture and break down resistance to the privatised culture change.

The new managers often have little idea of how to better the provision of public transport services and often fail to stop the deterioration of them. In fact their decisions actually are the most probable cause of the deterioration. For this they are paid more handsomely than the old State Bureaucrats.

An example of this new management style could be best demonstrated with the privatisation of Telstra. A new corporate culture oversaw the shedding of thousands of highly skilled jobs. Outsourcing became the new norm for maintenance, installations, customer service, management and all other tasks.

Consequently the telco slipped from a top rating in the world to something akin to a third world one. Despite sales of \$19billion P.A. it has failed to innovate and keep up with new technologies. It was not even allowed to bid to build the NBN. We are all the poorer (except if you own shares) because of the privatisation and we now pay much more for the service.

Outsourcing

One of the most visible results of Corporate Management of the State Enterprises is the outsourcing of almost all tasks, with a small core of Corporate Managers overseeing the whole process. The new private employees usually do not belong to a union and have inferior working conditions and lower wages than the replaced public sector workers did. Some employees such as cleaners are hired on 457 visas for substandard pay and no rights.

Running Down of Competing Services

Where State Enterprises compete with each other and with private services they are either terminated or run down. Motorways are built with public funds at the expense of public transport then flogged off to the Private Operators for a token low price. Profitable Airports are sold off to cartels of banks and financiers that charge exorbitant prices for the use of services. Even the rail lines and stations at the Airport Terminals are handed over to the private sector who charge ridiculously high fees. More the expense for us all. Convenient, cheap, public bus services between Sydney City and the Airport were terminated in favour of the private rail services to and from the Airport. There is less choice about how to get to the Airport.

Attacks on Working Conditions through New Agreements

Before any privatisation takes place exhausting industrial reform processes take place to shed jobs and to change the industrial landscape. Employee's become pawns in a strategy to ease the way to privatisation. This process can take many years or a decade or more of bargaining with unions and employee's. Little by little these processes wear away at the industrial strength of workers on the job due to the new insecurity that exists. Many workers are too scared to pop their heads up to fight despite the fact that the workforce around them is being attacked and decimated one section at a time. The mechanisms for these reform processes to take place are written into Enterprise Agreements which over the years have been endorsed by the union movement and voted on by union members. That is the sad fact of the matter. Members are never ever fully informed and therefore fail to understand what is contained in their Industrial agreement.

At every stage of privatisation the markers are visible - the process is well known. At every stage we have a chance to intervene and put a spanner in the works of Government's privatisation plans. In this so called Democracy it is the rich and powerful who have the ear of Government. It is they who pull the strings on politicians to further their own interests. If we want a fair share of the cake we have to stop privatisation. Believing that it is possible to stop privatisation is the first step to advancing the fight. But we must recognise what the steps are and challenge them at every opportunity. Even if the Unions agree to this and that clause with the Corporate Managers does not mean that we have to. The fight ahead is a massive one, involving all sectors of society. It has to be a democratic yet political struggle to wrest power from those that would sell us short and those that manipulate large sections of society to their own ends. Building a democratic rank and file organisation in your workplace and community is the first step to educating, encouraging and strengthening a mass movement that can challenge the status quo. This will be no light undertaking as failure is common. Perseverance strength and honesty is the key to the struggle. Good luck.

What is Democratic Unionism?

Democratic Unionism means grass roots controlled unionism, not control by officials. It also means that workers in one industry should be in one union so as to remove artificial divisions that can cause disunity. Such a union should be fully organised and controlled by the membership.

To achieve this we believe a union should be organised along the following lines:

1. That no person employed by the union should earn more than the average income of the membership.
2. The Spokespeople should have no executive power - all decisions should be made by the union membership in the course of mass meetings.
3. Spokespeople are only to act as delegates elected by the membership to carry out decisions made by the membership in mass meetings.
4. That a mechanism is instituted for the instant recall of spokespeople/delegates who break the above rules.
5. That all positions within the union be held on a limited tenure, the duration of which will be decided by the membership.
6. That a programme of decentralised decision-making be implemented within the union structure, so that we won't need full time officials.
7. All loss of earnings incurred by elected delegates who miss work as a result of carrying out union duties will be reimbursed by the union to the extent of the lost wages.

Only in this way will we see the creation of a democratic, united, fighting organisation which can stand up for the rights of workers and their families against unhelpful union officials, bosses, political parties and governments.

SYDNEY BUSES NEWS STOP PRESS: Is there a secret component in the contract to Transit Systems for Region 6 which allows the company to do what they like in regard to a range of costs and issues? Has the NSW Govt. provided a bottomless pit of money for the company to pull off the privatisation. As seems the case with the West-Connex?

1. Who is covering the transport and training of interstate drivers not used? 2. Who is paying for the transport, training and lodging of Kiwi drivers, not seen on the road as yet? 3. Who is covering the Consultancy fees for the likes of Jamie Sinclair, now chief honcho at Leichhardt depot? 4. Who met the tab for all the existing Region 6 drivers who were still in State Transit and were sent to a 9 day company induction course? 5. How come Region 6 drivers are already complaining of wage cuts? Despite the public notification, depending on the 3 months or 18 months version, you read, that there would be no change in drivers' conditions?

What is Democratic Unionism?

Democratic