

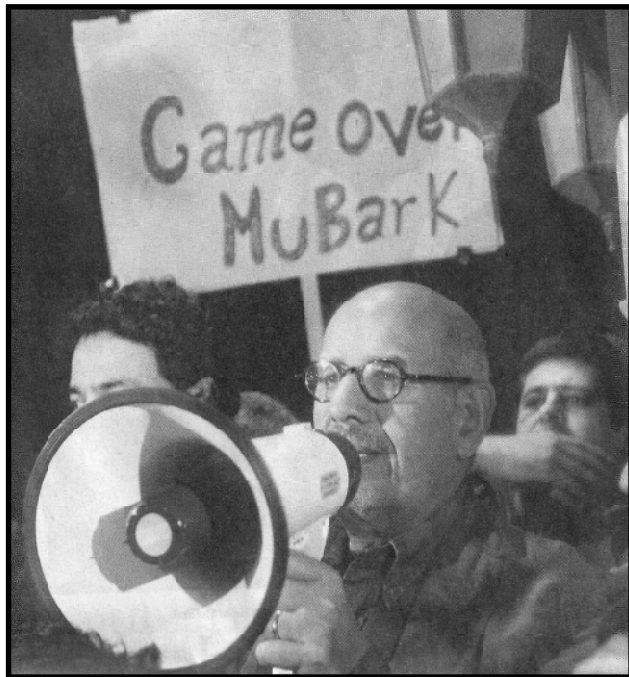
No.138

Feb. - Mar. 2011

# Sparks

THE RANK-AND-FILE TRANSPORT WORKERS' PAPER

**TUNISIA, YEMEN, EGYPT....RTBU! Members'  
Voice Assists Grass Roots Revolt Against  
RTBU Bosses' Tyranny!**



MEMBERS' VOICE FUTURE;  
WHAT WE LOST IN RAILCORP EA 2010;  
QLD RAIL JOB LOSSES;  
MARITIME TRANSPORT NEWS;

RTBU ELECTIONS;  
STA BUSIE NEWS;  
VIC. RAIL NEWS;  
WIKILEAKS & STA;

## **EDITORIAL**

Welcome to another edition of Sparks.


Some of the most important news lately is the elections in the RTBU (Rail Tram & Bus Union). Members' Voice, a grouping of grass roots activists which formed roughly 6 months ago has been very active. In regard to Rail Corp EA 2010, the grouping was active in the campaign to oppose it via exposing various attacks on jobs in a series of leaflets. Lately they have been very active in the current RTBU elections pushing a platform of membership control of the union and the development of a fighting union which can stop the steady decline in jobs and conditions which has occurred over the years with successive enterprise agreements. Their future directions are outlined in the article on Page 3.

Already the Rightwing ALP union officials in the RTBU have been getting up to some "monkey business" with union resources to assist their efforts in the current union elections. See article on Page 4 for an exposure of these rorts and the importance of kicking these rightwing dinosaurs out of office in this election, so as to help establish a fighting union. Capable of winning important victories in regard to jobs and conditions.

In this edition, we publish an article which provides a list of most of the attacks on jobs which comprise the so called "reforms" associated with Rail Corp EA 2010. Also presented are some "Burning Questions" regarding the EA and how it was "sold". How "Members' Voice" will combat such sellouts and establish grass roots control of the union is outlined. (See article Page 6.)

In State Transit, some important news has been more cutbacks to drivers' wages through cuts to shifts which is allowed by a certain clause in the last 2 enterprise agreements which the Rightwing ALP union officials appear to have no problem with. (See article on Page 9).

Others news is our working relationship with Wiki Leaks and a vast treasure trove of secret STA and Govt documents which were given to us and that we are referring to Wiki Leaks to expose via their Web Site. (See article Page 8.)



Sparks welcomes contributions by transport workers. Please send to PO Box 92 Broadway 2007 NSW or via our web site. To subscribe to Sparks make out only postal orders to Rebel Worker for \$5 for a one year sub. Sparks is published by the Sydney Local of the Network for Democratic Unionism. To subscribe to Rebel Worker, subs are \$12 pa via postal orders. Please send to PO Box 92 Broadway 2007 NSW.

**SPARKS WEB PAGE - [www.sparksworld.org](http://www.sparksworld.org)**

## What will Members' Voice do next?

**As we go to print voting is still taking place for RTBU positions. This is the first organised electoral challenge to the old guard within the union since the early 1980's. Regardless of the outcome Members' Voice has announced its arrival and will be seen by many as an alternative, in opposition, to the corrupt bureaucratic methods of the incumbents, whose allegiances lie elsewhere.**

In just over 6 months Members' Voice has established itself as an industrial force in the Public Transport arena and in particularly the Rail Tram and Bus Union in NSW.

We are not purely an electoral machine. We will continue to involve ourselves in every industrial fight on the job that is necessary and which effects members and their communities. We will keep up our activities of opposing reforms which reduce working conditions, privatisation or increased workloads..

This will be done by simultaneously consulting with members and constituents in our workplaces and working in a united way with them.

Importantly we will support struggles that impact on our communities such as more and better Public Transport, we will oppose privatisation in all its forms, we will push for measures which have the effect of reducing climate change, such as increasing public transport availability.

Our aims are also to democratise and decentralise decision making in our unions. This will be an ongoing process.

With the the NSW elections just around the corner and the prospect that a Liberal Government certainly will take power there is sure to be changes in policy. The way that the Government interacts with workers and the bureaucracy is expected to change.. The Liberals are hell bent on reforming labour relations by removing power from unions and workers. This coupled with a proposed privatisation agenda spells trouble for Public Transport workers if they do not oppose these changes vigorously. Members' Voice aims to be at the forefront of any resistance and fightback over Liberal or Labor programs that take away our rights.

We encourage all Public Transport Workers to get involved in Members' Voice and also give us some feedback about the election campaign.

We also take this opportunity to thank everyone who put their faith in Members' Voice by voting for our candidates and sharing a similar vision. We will do our best to serve you, work with you and not let you down.

## **RTBU Elections**

**RTBU elections are now in full swing and very interesting things are happening. The ballot will close on 21st Feb 2011. The present leadership is contesting the elections under the banner of the “United Leadership Team”. This team has the advantage of using RTBU resources to their advantage. In this election another group has emerged as a strong challenge to the leadership group. They are contesting the election under the banner of “Members Voice”. There was always a need for strong opposition in the RTBU.**

The RTBU has distributed a special edition of rail and road providing details of the candidates. This supplement seems to be more inclined to favour existing officials. The supplement gives preference to the leadership group and their candidates over the others by outlining voting preferences for this particular group. Even the order of candidates on the ballot paper has been shuffled in some cases to favour the leadership team.

It appears that the current officials have used the union’s resources to their advantage and misinformed the membership. Candidates who are not part of the leadership group have been disadvantaged by this unequal treatment. It is little wonder that many members feel the current leadership group exploit the resources of our union for their own advantage.

The current officials are desperate to get re elected but for a long time they have failed on many fronts:

1. Pay rises are not linked to CPI
2. Many trade-offs have been agreed to
3. Reforms agreed to in recent EBAs have not been explained to members

This union election is an opportunity for members to raise their common concerns and voice their opinions about the leadership. You should vote and make your choice wisely. Do not choose to discard your vote.

*by RTBU member in RailCorp*

## **Travel Passes for Private Buses Why it makes sense.**

During the recent changes to transport ticketing in NSW the question was raised by a number of employees about State Transport workers access to private buses using the free Travelpass which is part of the work entitlement.

There were guarantees from management and the unions that the question would be raised with Transport NSW. However the silence on this issue has been deafening and seemingly it has been put into the too hard basket.

The present policy whereby employees living and working within the Inner West, North Shore and Eastern Suburbs have access to bus services while employees from the Outer



Western Suburbs do not is discriminatory. This is because employees living and using services closest to the City are able to use Government bus services which are free on the work Travelpass while those in outlying areas have to pay dearly for travel on private buses.

This is a reflection of the general transport policy in NSW which discriminates against commuters depending on how far they live from the CBD.

We call for an extension of public Government bus services and other transport alternatives run by the State to areas which can least afford private buses and an end to poor public transport standards set by the private operators.

In the interim we call for the use of our Travelpass on all private bus services.

The benefits to the Transport Ministry and employees are many.

\* The scheme is probably close to cost neutral as many public transport workers travel out of peak periods and they are not taking up spaces of paying passengers.

\* It would free up limited car spaces at stations for commuters, as workers could catch the bus to the station instead of driving and parking.

\* It would reduce the risk of being injured by driving to work or the station, therefore reducing workers compensation payments. The chances of being injured seriously in a bus crash is less than in a car due to the larger number of individuals driving cars if this was not available.

\* The chances of employees being assaulted on the way to work or on the way home would also be reduced as they would not have to enter unattended car parks at remote locations to leave or retrieve their cars late at night or early morning.

\* It would reduce vandalism on employees cars which would be left at home instead of an un-attended car park.

\* It would increase the use of an under utilised resource, in so doing, reducing carbon emissions through individuals not having to use personal motor vehicles.

\* The bus will do its run despite the fact that there will be few passengers on board at the time that Public Transport employees will be using it.

\* Employees arrive at work in a more relaxed state and not having to worry about where they have left their car.

\* The car can be left at home for the spouse to use, reducing the need for 2 family cars.

\* It would provide a fair monetary saving for employees who normally catch private buses to the station or to work, as private bus fares can be very expensive.

Several employees have asked us to campaign on this issue. They believe that free travel on private buses can be achieved for Public Transport employees. The campaign for free travel on private buses for public transport employees starts now. What have we got to lose - we can only try!

We need your support to collect signatures and to raise these issues with your manager and union whenever the chance arises. *Crimson Coconut*

## **SOME BURNING QUESTIONS ABOUT RAILCORP ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT 2010 REFORMS**

Reforms Associated with RAILCORP EA 2010:

1. signal box automation and new work evaluation model;
2. sale of Martins Creek Quarry;
3. improving asset operations group capability through better resources allocation;
4. reform of process for filling of positions (former clause 23);
5. deliver an enterprise wide electronic learning capability;
6. adoption and implementation of a competence assurance training model;
7. implementation of a competence assurance training model
8. conversion of contractors to either permanent or fixed employment contracts;
9. introduction of mentor driver to improve driver training efficiency;
10. increase the use of train simulators and
11. operations division restructure;

# RAIL - BUS NEWS

RAILCORP: More of the same happening in 2011 with Staff Reviews and being used once again as a political football during the upcoming State Elections.

Another delay in the introduction of the Waratah trains due to more electrical and structural problems with the test trains which are causing manufacturing delays. Let's face it, this project was a failure from day one and needs to be shelved.

STA: New rosters introduced prior to Christmas has failed to improve on-time running. With heavy traffic dominating the Christmas/New Year period, many cancellations and adjustments had to be made to drivers' shifts with many "Ghost Trips" being run out of hours to avoid the STA being fined by Transport NSW for missed trips.

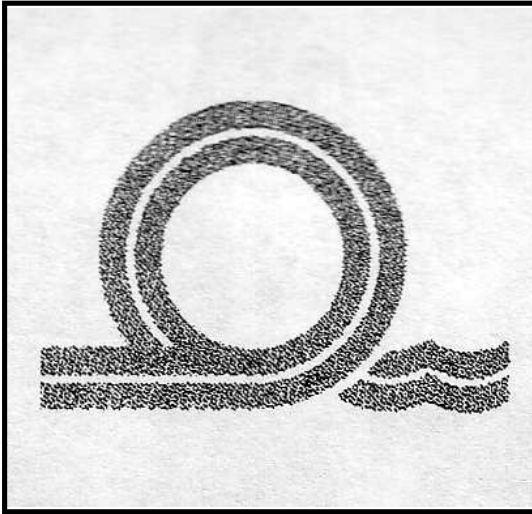
A shake-up in depot management has taken place with most depot managers being re-assigned to other depots. One major depot in particular will feel the iron fist of change with its extremely popular manager being re-assigned to another district.

POLITICAL: Both State Government and RTBU elections are about to happen with possible major changes resulting from both. At electorate level, disenchantment with the Union continues with the continual loss of working conditions for Rail and Bus employees. One hopes that the resulting ballot will go some way to rectifying the problems with the election of some new officials.

50 YEARS ON: February 26th 1961: A day which will forever live in infamy! The entire NSW Branch of the ALP should hang its collective head in shame on Saturday Feb. 26th, 2011. The 50th Anniversary of the last government-operated Sydney Trams to run in service. These ran from the City to La Perouse and Maroubra Beach. It was Labor who had progressively closed the largest tramway in Australia from 1948 to 1961. SHAME ON YOU!!!

*By The Transport Scrutinizer*





## **WIKI LEAKS COMES TO STATE TRANSIT!!!**

Some important news is that a “quiet achiever” at Strawberry Hills has provided Sparks with thousands of documents which reveal ALP and Liberal intentions and sinister corporate cowboy designs regarding “non-essential” utilities currently publicly owned such as State Transit and RailCorp. As the “quiet achiever” believed that the union executive was too lazy to publicise the treasure trove of documents through their media contacts.

Given the massive quantity of the documents we have not had the time to fully study them. However, as a result of the explosive nature of some of the documents we have studied, we decided to send one of our team to Sweden where the headquarters of Wiki Leaks is located. His mission was to approach the organisation to help us with the widespread release of the documents on the internet. Wiki Leaks advised our team member, that following examining some of the documents, that they are considering releasing the most explosive and sizzling on their web site and will advise their decision during the upcoming NSW elections.



# S.T.A. BUSIE NEWS

## WAVERLEY DEPOT NEWS

### **Sparks: What's the latest with the mechanical section?**

Waverley Busie: Since the last edition of Sparks was published, the mechanics have been issued with a new van. However, it was empty and requires a complete refit. Recently I noticed the mechanics' former van in a street somewhere in the city.

### **Sparks: What are your impressions of the new buses which have been introduced into the depot fleet?**

WB: I have noticed that many of them are faulty. In one of these buses which I was driving recently, the front windscreen was moving. In another, after starting it, the bus went slowly for 10 minutes despite me carrying out the normal procedures to tackle the problem, such as stopping and starting the bus several times. Whilst, only after pressing the backdoor release button several times did it work. It certainly appears that the bosses hurried the new buses into service.

### **Sparks: What are your thoughts on the Red Top "Metro Buses"?**

WB: After the explorers are they the next target for privatisation? It certainly appears Veolia has its eye on the Metros. It is a major player in the takeover of privatised govt. utilities and services such as recycling, water, garbage and public transport. Recently Veolia and Hills have commenced operating their own Metros. Whilst in a TV program focusing on bosses going on the job and pretending to be workers, Veolia bosses made an appearance. The program presented Veolia as warm hearted business. In reality, this \$65 billion corporation is quite ruthless. Any way they can, they strive to undercut their competitors through cutting out jobs. Is the NSW Govt in collusion with the media, trying to butter us up for a takeover by Veolia? I have noticed that the metros have been assigned their own bus zones. Are these zones – their zones or our zones?

With the recent sell off of the explorers and mechanical section on the road services, the STA looks to be waiting to be privatised. Is the recent sacking of a driver over having 4 accidents of which, only 1 was his fault, a way the STA is testing workers in how we will react in different situations, involving attacks by the bosses, such as in the case of privatisation? The old policy in regard to accidents was to have drivers assessed by driver instructors to find out what problems exist in their driving which contribute to accidents. With this new hardline approach, drivers will be discouraged from completing accident reports. This sacking of the Waverley driver is quite counterproductive.

## **The World is not “For Sale!”**

The multinational corporate cowboys with billions of dollars to play with are gradually gobbling up many public owned utilities such as water and electricity in Australia and internationally. With NSW public transport no doubt next on their hit list. In other countries people have begun to understand the privatisation threat and are standing up and fighting back. In Australia, we seem to accept it as inevitable.

With Liberal Leader Barry O’Farrell’s talk that in his first item of business in his first term in office is to fix up public transport infrastructure and the roads. Does this mean privatisation of public transport? The Liberal’s aren’t clear on their policy. This is a big worry. In South Australia, following the Liberals takeover, they initially promised not to privatise the electricity board. However, 6 months later it was privatised.

## **Our Dignity has no Price Tag!**

A likely strategy of Veolia or any other corporate cowboys with their eye on the STA is to offer us a much higher rate of pay such as \$27 to \$28 per hour. In comparison to our current roughly \$26 per hour. As a result, they will conger the illusion that we will be better off under private ownership. In fact we’ll be much worse off. We’ll lose a range of conditions and entitlements such as home and duty passes. Our wives or partners will also lose these entitlements. Will those with less than 10 years service be paid pro rata their long service entitlements or will it be lost? Will a 7% loading be paid on the cashed in long service leave? It’s likely there will be no training as new already trained up drivers are easy to get. Most of the current 3,500 drivers in the STA could become either casuals or part time. What will happen with our Super? It’s likely we will be obliged to transfer our money into much worse private sector funds. What will happen to our worker funded canteens? Will they be sold off to a private company? I dare say, all these entitlements will be lost as a private company would want to start fresh with everyone starting new on the job. My idea, is that in the case of privatisation the STA should give a golden handshake to those long term employees.

The public will also lose out with the generally poor service of privately owned public transport.

## **Who are You Going to Vote For?**

You hate the ALP? However if the Liberals get in, they will also destroy our jobs due to their budget phobia. We need to consider rejecting voting for the major parties and look at more progressive groups such the greens, Socialist Alliance and independents. Such groups despite their small size and limited resources in comparison to the ALP and Liberals, they could hold the balance of power in Parliament and so stymie the more devastating attacks of the Liberals when in power in NSW. According to recent poll at the end of January, 56% of people weren’t



clear on the Liberals' policies. This poll also revealed there was a 40% gap between the major parties and the ALP/Libs had only a combined 53% of votes.

**Sparks: What are your impressions of the NSW ALP Govt?**

WB: A startling aspect of its performance has been its role in the spearheading of privatisation in Australia, with its privatisation of many public utilities such as the Lotteries, the Water Board, and the electricity industry. At the protest, I believe both the ALP and the Liberals got their "marching orders" to push ahead with privatisation at the Forbes 500 conference held several years ago in Sydney. Where the Billionaires demanded the rapid selloff of public assets. Whilst representatives of supposedly democratic governments connived with key Big Business figures behind closed doors. Thousands of people protested outside the

conference. At the demonstration I met some people who definitely had their fingers on the political pulse who agreed with my analysis of the hidden agenda of the conference.

Intriguingly I came across a newspaper clipping the other day, it was the report of a statement made by Patricia Foresight President of the NSW Chamber of Commerce in mid 1990. Advocating the selloff of a range of public utilities such as public housing, electricity and water which she considered to be “non” essential. She considered such sectors as the police and the fire brigade as “essential” and should remain public owned and operated. She considered that the proceeds from sale of the “non” essential utilities should go to provide corporate “welfare”.

**Sparks: What’s the latest regarding shifts at Waverley?**

WB: There is a puzzling situation occurring. The bosses have recently cut many drivers’ shifts at the depot to save dollars. While in a similar vein, the bosses are stingy with providing overtime for the mechanical to tackle the problem of water in bus engines. However, they discourage us from checking passengers tickets and so encourage fare evasion. Despite, money from ticket sales being the chief source of STA revenue. Why? This is weird.

**Sparks: What are your impressions of bus frequency in the evening in the Bondi area?**

WB: One evening recently I was doing some shopping in Bondi Junction and was waiting in the immediate off peak hour period to catch a bus in the east side of the mall. I kept waiting and waiting for a 380 to 381. When one of the buses turned up it was full and didn’t stop. I felt quite frustrated and went to another stop. It appears the STA has cut back these services in the 7pm and 8.30 pm period. Whilst the 333’s don’t stop in the mall side of the interchange. However, the 389’s are much frequent. These bus cutbacks show the negative effects of corporatisation on the STA with its money making machine approach. Whilst commuters are losing due to the lack of off peak bus services.

**Sparks: What’s the latest with the Coogee Terminus?**

WB: A crisis situation is developing as there is no space to park your bus in the AM peak. Due to express buses and N50’s dominating the terminus, there are no parking spots available. Recently I was on a run to the Terminus, and was unable to find a parking spot, despite going right around Clovelly Road. Consequently, I had no time for my break. It’s a nightmare! It’s going to the sharks. New services are put on, no matter the costs.

**Sparks: What are your views on Transport NSW?**

WB: Recently, we were issued with the Transport NSW uniform. It certainly is thinner and looks cheaper. Our older uniforms were of heavier cloth. Whilst no jumpers have been issued. It’s not a good sign. It certainly implies there is no more State Transit and its open slather for the corporate cowboys.

**Sparks: What are your impressions of the toilets at the Clovelly terminus?**

WB: The male toilets there are in a filthy state. The smell is abhorrent. There is crap everywhere. Why do we have to put up with these 3rd World standards? Where is the cleaner? Does the new cleaning contract provide less money, so less cleaning is done by the cleaners? Or are the cleaners just not doing their jobs? At Clovelly I recently spoke with a female Randwick

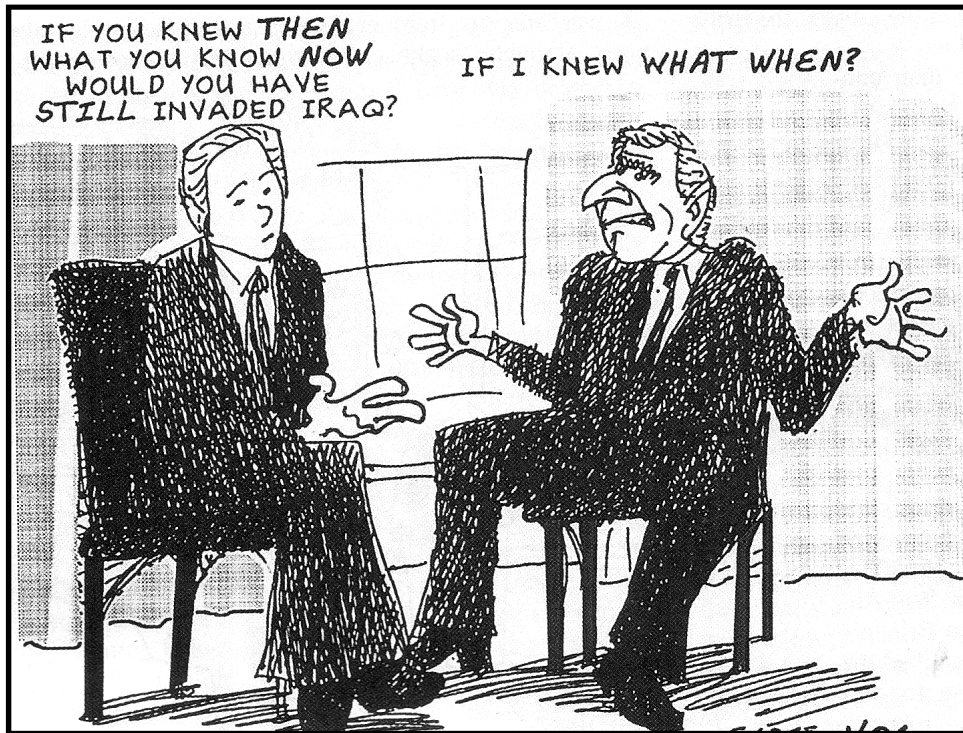
driver who advised that the female toilets were in a similar appalling state. She was going to approach higher management to find out why the toilets aren't being cleaned. At Waverley only after a considerable period of time were the toilets cleaned satisfactorily. The toilets at Strawberry Hills would of course be in immaculate condition. It appears we are seeing another instance of the stinginess of the STA bosses.

## LEICHHARDT DEPOT NEWS

### Sparks: What's the latest at Leichhardt?

Leichhardt Busie: Some of the most important news is that according to the new roster an important gain won by union action in the past is being taken from us by the bosses. They are again wanting us to do change over's at William Street. A union meeting is being held shortly to discuss the issue. Latest news is that this changeover has been moved to Perry Street. More changeovers have been introduced by the STA in the interest of saving money, resulting in more late running. In one case recently, due to the changeovers a driver was 1 hour late.

Other news on a more positive note is that we are taking over 5-6 of Burwood's routes. However, for one of the routes the bosses were trying to save a few dollars by not providing for route training. This particularly affects the trainees who are liable to have more accidents due to this corner cutting. Luckily due to local union action, the bosses have had to back down on



this decision. A bizarre situation has also developed, despite the loss of these routes, Burwood needs more drivers. As a result despite this extra work, we have to send more of our drivers to Burwood. Latest news is that Leichhardt has become so short staffed, that drivers from Pt. Botany and other depots have been transferred here.

**Sparks: What's happening on the road?**

LB: I am constantly amazed why the bosses always have people out checking bus running times. When they refuse to do anything about the existing unrealistic running times. During the Xmas/New Year Holiday Period, with few other vehicles on road, we can only operate at 30 km per hour to avoid early running, which the bosses take a tough line on.

## **BURWOOD DEPOT NEWS**

**Sparks: What the latest with the elections at Burwood?**

Burwood Drover: We have a new union rep who won office unopposed. Although he has not become officially the union rep, the grass roots are already complaining about him. They consider he is acting in a dictatorial manner. He appears to only want things run his way.

**Sparks: How things with the buses?**

BD: In the hot weather many are complaining about having to run the Mercedes un-air conditioned buses. However, every depot has its quota of Mercedes to operate.

**Sparks: What are your impressions of Transport NSW which is taking over from State Transit and Rail Corp in the running of public transport?**

BD: It may make it less likely for privatisation of the buses. Its existence may be in line with the lessons Governments have learned from the running down of public transport following privatisation which has occurred in Victoria and Auckland in New Zealand. With the red buses operated by Transport NSW there are certain running and maintenance requirements which have to be met. Given say Veolia's past poor performance in running its bus services, it's unlikely they could meet these standards.

## **VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS**

*In Sparks editions 135 and 136 issues have been raised by V/Line employees about Departmental Heads not having the guts to stand up to Human Resources plus Human Resources bullying employees. Once again Drivers, Conductors, Station Staff have combined to discuss these issues. Names have been changed.*

**Sparks: What are these fools in Human Resources up to this time?**

Rastus & Roscoe: Once again our supreme fuehrer Dr. Dolittle called a toolbox meeting to talk about drivers riding with other drivers in cabs of Railmotors. The meeting was a joke.

You see he had this woman who works with Human Resources around him. He hasn't the guts to appear on his own.

**Sparks: What a weak bastard!**

Sheona: If Human Resources want to interview our employee, they send a registered letter to their home address.

Bascom: Two of our conductors were sent a registered letter.

Clarence : This is to make sure they attend.

Rastus and Roscoe: What a waste of money. It looks like these jerks are frightened employees will not turn up to these hearings. You see Drivers are refusing to attend. It looks like our message to employees in issue 134 has had some effect.

Sheona: You can say that again Human Resources read the issue and are trying to find out who these people are.

**Sparks: It is good to see employees standing up to these people.**

Bascom: I will tell you of one incident on a train. What happened was a young boy was injured in a train. The Conductor administered First Aid to the boy and the Conductor working in the Buffett gave the boy a chocolate and a soft drink to comfort him.

**Sparks: What happened? Did the Conductors get thanked for what they had done?**

Bascom: No. The Conductors were made to front Human Resources and given a dressing down over giving away Buffett stock.

**Sparks: You have to be joking.**

Bascom: One of the Conductors on walking out of the inquiry threw down a five dollar note and told them where to go.

Rastus & Roscoe: What a joke. These Conductors should have received a commendation. They served V/Line Legal and Medical claims. This mob carried on about a loss of seven dollars.

Bascom: You see the person in charge of Catering used to be the Conductor Manager. He was moved sideways to Catering with a mission to make it pay. You see under an instruction from the Department of Transport, if a train travels over a certain distance, the train has to carry a buffet car.

Sheona: It's quite stupid to call in these Conductors over a trivial matter. Management would have read the injury form.

Rastus: The sending of a registered letter is a waste of money. I wonder if any drivers would turn up.

Roscoe: I think of the cost of sending a letter.

Clarence: When you are sent a letter you are told not to discuss the letter with other workers.

Rastus & Roscoe: It we were sent a registered letter then we would call a meeting of the drivers and give each driver a copy of the letter with the incident that we are charged over. You see you touch one you touch all!

Clarence: We have a new woman from Human Resources at Southern Cross.

Sheona: Yes, it is a new reshuffle.

Clarence: Once again it was Christmas and one of the employees had a Santa Claus tie he was wearing.

**Sparks: What happened?**

Clarence: This woman went up to the employee and grabbed his tie and said. "Why are you not in uniform?" The employee said. "Who are you?" Then she said, she was from Human Resources.

Rastus & Roscoe: This woman should have introduced herself and not pull the employee's tie. This is assault.

Bascom: If she did this to myself I would have gone to the police.

Clarence: As a result of this incident, the Union was contacted and they told management what would happen. Management backed down but the woman did not apologise to the station staff. Also what makes myself sick is that the woman is still at Southern Cross.

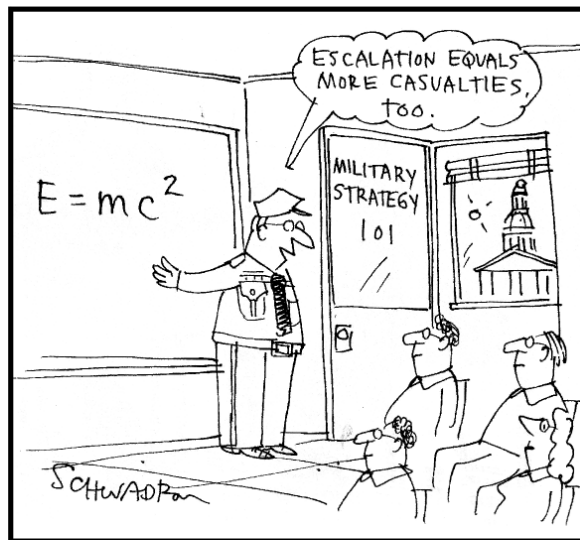
Rastus & Roscoe: At the drivers complex a woman from Human Resources turned up and was sitting in the drivers' meal room. The drivers told her to get out so she left and was told not to return. You see Dr Doolittle is going on holidays and this woman wants to run the Department. She is in for a shock. We will make the job unworkable within the law.

Sheona: Head Office particularly Human Resources want to smash the Drivers. If they succeed then they will go after the other sections of V/Line.

Clarence: Unfortunately as well as Human Resources, we have Conductors who crawl to the Department just to get a promotion. They would rat on their workmates. There is a Country Depot where one Conductor dobs in Conductors from another depot if for example a person is in the wrong seat in a carriage on a train he relieves.

**Sparks: In conducting, the Conductors who gave the child a free drink and chocolate, should have received a commendation. The Human Resources woman at Southern Cross should be removed and as for these Conductors and Station Staff who dob in their work mates. Don't work with them.**

Rastus and Roscoe: Once again we will have the final say. If you receive a letter from Human Resources advising you to front them, make a copy of the letter to let everyone read it and don't front them.





*Continued From Page 6*

12. CCTV Capability on Trains
13. Internal Emergency Door Release (IEDR);
14. Digital Train Radio System (DTRS);
15. Automatic Train Protection (ATP);
16. Introduction of Waratah trains;
17. The instituting of efficiency mechanisms including: reform of corporate and support functions; changes in second or consequent train preparation; consolidation of business support functions in asset operations group; the restructure of service delivery group support roles.

## **SOME BURNING QUESTIONS**

**Who negotiated these reforms?**

**Did the members accept these reforms?**

**Who stopped the Legally accepted industrial action?**

**Were the members properly consulted or given an alternative to the “show of hands” voting of the EA?**

## **THE MEMBERS’ VOICE ALTERNATIVE APPROACH:**

- All negotiations on wages and conditions include the full participation of members through mass meetings and regular consultation
- The public transport system is properly funded and expanded to meet the growing needs of Sydney’s commuters
- The RTBU develops a clear strategy to fight strongly against privatisation, against job losses and against the contracting out of government services
- The power to make union decisions is placed in the hands of members. Delegates and officials should act only on the instructions of members
- Top officials are paid no more than ordinary rank and file members
- All potential conflicts of interest are declared and managed appropriately
- All union funds and finances are fully transparent and available to members for inspection
- Our union is independent of party politics

It is time the union office connects with the membership and ends its links with the employers and the party of government. Enough is enough. End the top down control and mismanagement of our union. It is time for renewal and change. For a fighting union vote for Members Voice.

## INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT NEWS

### **The Israel Veolia ‘Connexion’**

**In 2002, the CityPass consortium won a tender put out by the Israeli authorities for a light rail transportation project worth around 500 million Euros. This light rail system would link with settlements in the Occupied West Bank and its path follows the notorious Apartheid Wall separating Palestinian territory from the rest of Israel. The project plays a key role in sustaining the illegal settlements and ensuring they became a permanent fixture upon Palestinian land, while at the same time maintaining a system of Apartheid that isolates Palestinians and limits their mobility.**

The project, a private-public partnership (PPP) between the Israeli Government and the consortium, includes two French multi-nationals, Alstom and Veolia along with Veolia’s transport subsidiary, Connex.

For the past several years Veolia and Alstom have been the target of an international campaign - “Derail Veolia and Alstom” – aimed at exposing their complicity in the ongoing injustice against the Palestinian people by the Israeli state.

This campaign has been fought under the banner of a larger campaign of solidarity for Palestinians called the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Movement. The BDS Movement commenced in 2005 when a large number of Palestinian activists and campaign groups called upon international organizations and people of conscience across the world to impose broad boycotts and implement divestment initiatives against Israel, similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era, until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people’s fundamental right to self-determination and fully complies with international law.

To date the Derail Veolia and Alstom campaign has met with considerable success and has been instrumental in costing Veolia around €5 billion in lost contracts, including the City of Melbourne stripping Connex of their contract to run Melbourne’s trams in 2009 and the loss of a €3.5 billion contract to run the subway in Stockholm also in 2009.

In an indication of the campaign’s success Veolia and Alstom have recently announced that they are withdrawing from Israel’s light rail project with a Veolia spokesperson recently admitting that the BDS movement had cost the company “important contracts”. Veolia is currently trying to sell its shares in the light rail project with the sell off of shares to occur gradually over a five-year period. Meanwhile both Alstom and Veolia maintain a variety of other contracts with the Israeli Government including urban transport and waste disposal. These continuing links mean both Veolia and Alstom remain a target of ongoing protest by campaigners and pressure remains to ensure they adhere to their commitment to pull out of the light rail project.

That two international corporations with multi-billion Euro turnovers have been forced to withdraw from a project that they have funneled considerable resources into defending is an

important signal of the strength and moral weight of the BDS movement. The fact that both Veolia and Alstom are being replaced by Israeli companies rather than more experienced international companies, who surely would have been preferable replacements in the eyes of the Israeli authorities, indicates that no international companies are willing to become targets of this highly effective and visible movement. A growing number of Australian unions are joining the BDS Movement including the ETU, AMWU and CFMEU. Let us extend the Derail Veolia and Alstom campaign and continue to send a clear message that people of conscience all over the world will not stand by while corporations aid and abet Israeli war crimes.

*by Max Stirner*

*with thanks to:*

<http://bdsmovement.net/>

## **Greeks take to buses and roads in new protests**

*by Rob Ray*

*on Jan 9 2011*

A new front is opening in the struggle between Greece's Socialist government and its beleaguered subjects as public and private transport users co-ordinate mass sabotage in the face of spiralling prices. On January 8th angry public transport users sealed ticket machines and refused en masse to ride buses, trains or underground services as part of a nationwide protest against ticket price increases of up to 180%. The hikes come at the same time as a raft of painful government changes kick in for the new year including the killing off of public subsidies for transport, tax hikes, job cuts and rising utility prices. Incomes are also falling as part of a catastrophic 5% shrinking of the economy, a situation which EU-imposed austerity measures has done few favours for in recent months. Activists are planning to follow up on the action on January 9th with a mass campaign of non-payment and blockades against the privately-owned national road tolls network, which has been given the go-ahead to hike prices in 2011, ostensibly to pay for infrastructure improvements. The popular campaign to end the road tolls system has led to around a third of all drivers on Greek roads regularly refusing outright to pay the tolls, which organisers say have amounted to little more than extortion with almost no improvements being made to the network. In a statement released today, stopcartel.org noted: "The roads are the people's property, constructed with the money of the taxpayers over the years and therefore nobody has the right to demand payment for their use." The government has responded to the possibility of disruption by threatening arrests and the imposition of heavy fines or even imprisonment.

*Thanks to Libcom*

## 3500 Jobs to be Axed in Qld Rail!

MORE than 3000 workers who were promised their jobs would be safe under a privatised Queensland Rail are now being asked to consider redundancy packages.

QR National, which was sold off in a \$6.7 billion public share float in November, has asked 3500 employees - more than a third of its 9400-strong workforce between Townsville and Brisbane - to consider voluntary redundancies.

A QR National spokesman said a reduction in the size of the workforce was needed for the company to remain competitive.

“We have proposed a VR (voluntary redundancy) scheme at this time for operational reasons and to help ensure the size of sections of our workforce are relative to our competitors and industry benchmarking,” the spokesman said.

Redundancies would be decided next month with the first changes to be made in April in what the Opposition has dubbed “an outrageous Labor betrayal”.

Before sell-off of the freight haulage arm of Queensland Rail, workers were assured their jobs would be safe for at least three years.

In a statement issued by managing director Lance Hockridge in August 2010, QR National said new workplace agreements offered “employees and investors certainty”.

Under those agreements negotiated by the Rail Tram and Bus Union, workers were granted a one-off payment of \$4000, a 4 per cent pay rise and an extension of the employment guarantee from two years to more than three.

The package was compensation for the workers losing the guarantee of a job for life.

The State Government, which remains the major shareholder in QR National, also gave each worker \$1000 worth of shares in the company.

A spokesman for Treasurer Andrew Fraser yesterday said the redundancy offers were “entirely a matter for QRN”.

### **PATHETIC RESPONSE BY RTBU OFFICIALS**

**RTBU secretary Owen Doogan said the offer of voluntary redundancies less than three months after the company was publicly listed had come as a surprise.**

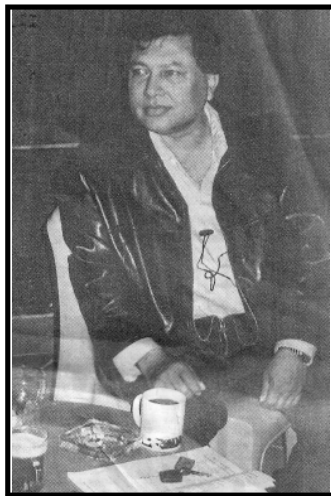
**“We didn’t expect it to occur so soon but what’s going to happen now is that there will be further consultation before we formulate our position,” he said.**

**The packages offer workers three weeks pay for every year of service.**

## OBITUARY - FARUQUE AHMED

**Until his sudden death from pneumonia on Christmas eve last at Sydney's RPA Hospital, Faruque Ahmed, the 51 year old, fire-brand, taxi driver of Bangladeshi background, was widely regarded as the leading figure in the New South Wales Taxi Industry. But he was at the opposite end of the pole from Taxi Council boss, his arch rival, Reg Kermode.**

Agitation amongst cabbies, through on-line web sites, pamphlets, newsletters, union rank and file meetings, talk back radio, industrial and civil courts, even Parliament House itself, were all arenas and methods employed by Ahmed Faruque over a twenty four year period, in what was regarded as a personal and unrelenting mission to see justice done for Sydney's long exploited "bailee" or non-owner taxi drivers. Sadly he did not live to see the fruits of his labour as drivers wait for the wash out from the 2010 Upper House Parliamentary Inquiry into the industry to be implemented to their advantage after the March 2011 NSW elections..



Faruque was born into a middle class family in Dacca in Bangladesh. He is survived by two brothers and two sisters there who have requested his body be returned for burial in his homeland after a service (28/12/10) for him at the Lakemba Mosque.

Faruque's initial voyage to Australia was not by design but as a political refugee. After matriculation in his homeland he faced threats to his personal safety when he became involved in militant trade union groups under Bangladesh's military influenced government in the 1970s.

He escaped to Iraq, of all places, where he worked as a labourer in the petroleum industry from 1978-82 until he was deported by Saddam's secret police for attempting to organise democratic rights for the workers. He then came to Australia and settled here quickly as a migrant.

His first jobs were in refineries at Kurnell and Silverwater. He left the industry in the mid 1980s after a dispute involving safety issues. He became a cabbie and worked first at Burgess base in Enmore Road in 1987-88.

In 1991-92 he joined the Transport Workers Union Taxi Driver's Steering Committee during a TWU recruitment phase. When it was clear that many of the other cabbies who joined the Union did not receive postal ballot papers for the election, a recall saw Faruque's Steering Committee members sweep the new election.

In the early 1990's the former Mayor of Woollahra, Hilda Rolfe was appointed as a Commissioner on the Trade Practices Commission. She was appointed by the State Government to investigate the conditions of owner-driver lorry drivers in NSW.

Against the TWU Union's wishes Faruque and other Steering Committee members put in a joint submission, and individual submissions, to this Rolfe Inquiry on behalf of bailee drivers. Commissioner Rolfe described Faruque as a "fiery cannon" but accepted his claims and recommended to the Greiner Liberal Government that Chapter 6 of the (1991) Industrial Relations Act in NSW should be amended to include an "anti-victimization" clause to protect bailee drivers from owners imposing harsh and unfair working conditions on their employment. Under the new Act owners could be "criminally liable" for mistreatment and harassment.

With other drivers Faruque was instrumental in shifting the industrial relations landscape of the annual contract determination for the taxi industry, in one year appealing to the Full Bench of the IRC (Matter 67-87 IRC 1993) where although they lost the appeal, a redirection was ordered upon IRC Commissioner Connor in the lower court over the contract determination.

Labor Party Transport Minister Brian Langdon accepted pressure from Faruque's lobby group of cabbies over the safety for drivers issue.

*By J.Lee*

## **Wharfies strike over conditions at Patrick Stevedores**

*by Spartacus on Dec 27 2010*

Maritime Union of Australia members in Patrick Stevedoring facilities at Fremantle, Albany, Melbourne's Webb Dock, and Geelong have voted overwhelmingly to take protected action after a secret ballot conducted by the Australian Electoral Commission. Wharfies in Fremantle took industrial action on the 27th December for 72 hours, with workers in Albany to follow on December 30 for 48 hours. Webb Dock and Geelong have not yet provided notice when they are taking action. Fremantle Port Authority spokeswoman Ainslie De Vos said two vessels could potentially be affected by the strike. "One of the vessels in the inner harbour in Fremantle will be affected by the strike and possibly a bulk

ship in Kwinana will be affected," she said. The industrial action follows 6 months of negotiations which the union has labelled as unfruitful and unsatisfactory. The unions claims include: negotiations on wage rises, increasing the levels of permanency and career progression, increased training particularly regarding OH&S procedures and the safety culture on the waterfront, better processes for consultation rather than enforcement, and a disputes procedure that allows for independent arbitration when workers and management are unable to resolve disputes. MUA National Secretary Paddy Crumlin said "After

six months of patient, reasonable and determined negotiations on our part, Patrick has refused to meet the Union even part of the way. This is not an unreasonable wage claim; in fact wages are quite literally the least of our priorities. This is about the safety and well-being of workers at Patrick bulk and general facilities." "I am horrified to hear that OH&S representa-

tives that have raised safety issues on behalf of workers have been targeted by management through disciplinary measures. This same heavy handed approach by management is applied across the workforce." Paddy Crumlin said. There have been 3 workplace deaths on the waterfront in 2010, with 60% of the Patrick workforce is employed on a casual basis. Some of these workers have been casual for over 9 years and the average is around 5 years, according to the MUA. There is minimal training and it is delivered without a strategic or purposeful framework. The MUA and Patricks were at the centre of the 1998 Waterfront dispute where the company attempted to dismiss its workforce on mass and bring in a non-union workforce. The plan to de-unionise the waterfront was hatched in collusion with senior members of the Howard Government."With the assistance of Work Choices, Patrick has instilled an antiquated and - frankly - dangerous management culture at these facilities." said Paddy Crumlin. After six months of negotiations there are no resolutions to any of the National claims, or on any local negotiations at the 12 sites currently negotiating.

**STOP PRESS** From Saturday 29/1/11 up to 160 wharfies have been on strike at Fremantle and Albany ports and the Australian Marine Complex at Kwinana as part of union claims which include moving long term casuals to permanent positions. Currently 60% of Patricks workers are casuals.

# AMERICA'S GROWTH INDUSTRIES **NOW HIRING!**



## 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.

### **MEMBERS' VOICE**

### **WEB SITE:**

**[Http:// users.tpg.com.au/retepsni/membersvoice](http://users.tpg.com.au/retepsni/membersvoice)**









# What is Democratic Unionism?

Democratic