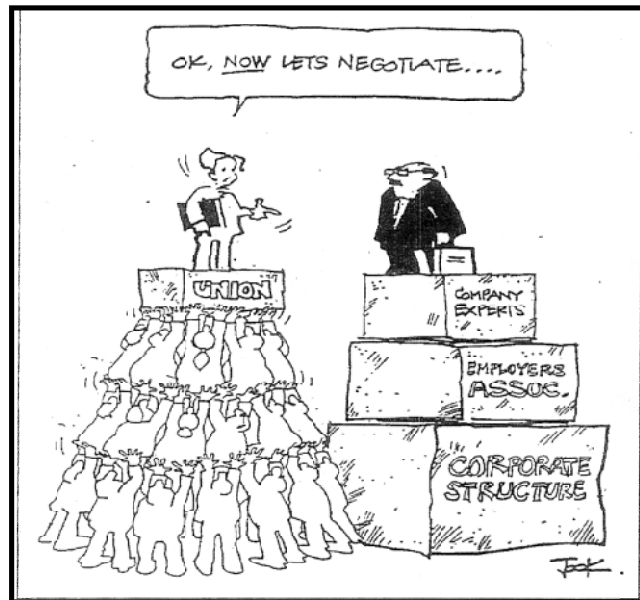


# Sparks

THE RANK-AND-FILE TRANSPORT WORKERS' PAPER

**ALP UNION HIERARCHY OPENS DOOR TO  
ATTACKS ON PENALTY RATES, SPLIT &  
REDUCED SHIFTS, FORCED REDUNDANCIES  
WITH RAIL EA! ONLY DIRECT ACTION CAN  
ACHIEVE WAGES & CONDITIONS JUSTICE!**



STA Busie News;  
Budget Open Letter;  
Victorian Rail News;  
Newcastle Bus News;

NSW Rail EA Updates;  
Privatisation & You;  
International News;  
The Greatest Story;

## **EDITORIAL**

Welcome to another edition of Sparks.

Continuing to be the most important news in the NSW Railways is the upcoming Enterprise Agreement. Ever more details are coming to hand of how vicious the E.A. will be. Apart from opening the door to mass sackings, many basic entitlements are under attack. Classic divide and conquer tactics are being deployed with proposed two E.A.'s. (See articles Page 3 & 5.) Whilst the ALP union hierarchy has cravenly caved into the Govt. and management agenda. All aimed at securing a meagre pay rise for them to "buy votes" in the upcoming elections. Another news item focused upon in this edition is the return of the cleaners from Transfield. (See article Page 8.)

In State Transit, the most explosive news is the targeting of Newcastle Buses for privatisation, according to a reliable source. (See article Page 12.)

Whilst the bosses are using the May Roster changes and the bogus "lateness campaign" to ratchet up the speed up in the job. Occupational Health and Safety considerations are being thrown out the window. (See article Page 12.) The savage cutting of some shifts in the new rosters, which is in breach of the Enterprise Agreement, just goes to show the fraudulent nature of enterprise bargaining and the bankruptcy of the "legalistic" approach of the union hierarchy to such brazen attacks. (See article Page 17.)



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 web site [www.sparksweb.org](http://www.sparksweb.org)

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## **SPARKS WEB SITE -**

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# N.S.W. RAILWAY NEWS

## STOP WORK TO SAVE OUR CONDITIONS

**Management is remaining steadfast in cutting working conditions and jobs through proposed rolling reforms it hopes to achieve through EBA 2014.**

The NSW government is adamant that they will not budge from removing clauses out of the new EBA which relate to Salary Maintenance and to Voluntary Redundancy. After September 2016 management are proposing that “excess” employees will receive just 12 week’s notice that they are surplus to requirements, receiving just 25 weeks redundancy pay regardless of how long they have worked. This is a pittance by any standard.

They are also proposing that employees receive Salary Maintenance only for 3 months if they are forced into lower graded jobs. Most worrying are proposals that seek further reforms to be carried out during the terms of the agreement, by negotiation or by changing the agreement by consultation with those affected. If we are to have an agreement at all, changes to working conditions and conditions of employment have to be spelled out before hand within the agreement. Otherwise there is no point to having an agreement at all. We do not want management or the State Government to spring nasty surprises on us as they did with EBA 2010.

As I write this, union delegates are meeting to consider a response to management’s latest proposals. The decent thing to do would have been to consult with members first, before the delegates meeting and before responding to management. Will we possibly be handed down a recommendation from the union hierarchy without much input from the general membership?

Already 1000’s of members have lost jobs through reforms since EBA 2010. The remaining staff, whether on stations, train crewing or in administration are feeling very insecure as they do not know where the axe will fall next. They have also had to pick up the workload of the displaced employees. Despite this, management is offering a miserly 3% increase on ratification of the agreement, a further 3% in 12 months time, then a final 1% 24 months later, (with conditions of course).

Unless we stop this rot in its tracks It is very probable that within a few years front line staff will be either part-time or casual, managed by a handful of full-timers.

At this stage we do not know much of the proposed detail in EBA 2014, (we should by the way), but from the glimpses that we have seen there is an attack on our conditions that is fairly unprecedented.

Already many union delegates have rejected the proposed changes to the enterprise agreement. I have no doubts that many staff are also horrified by many of the proposed changes and want to do something about them.

It is time to stop dilly dallying. Management has had long enough to bargain in good faith. They are not willing to compromise on much at all. We must be prepared to draw our own line in the sand and begin immediately to build an industrial campaign from our workplaces.

Cleverly (if not illegally) management has tried to head off any threat of industrial action by offering a 2.27% back pay from 1st April 2014 which is contingent on not taking any industrial action leading up to the signing of the agreement.

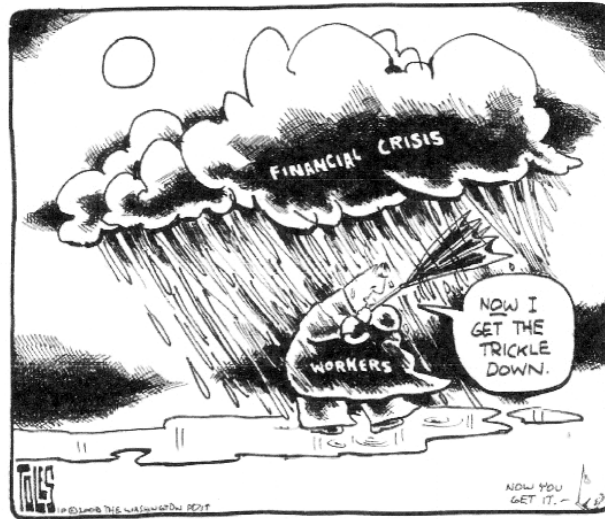
To my mind this would contravene the Fair Work provisions which allows limited protected action during the negotiation period. The threat to withdraw the back-pay could be construed as a form of coercion.

On the London underground management proposed the sacking of all ticket selling staff and the elimination of most of the station staff. They did this under radical reforms which could be a pointer to what could happen here once the Opal Card is bedded down in NSW. Also, similar to what has occurred here, management in London were refusing to budge.

But instead of just accepting this attack on London rail workers the RMT, the union representing rail workers on the Tube, called a series of rolling 24 hr stoppages which went ahead. British newspapers and television carried pictures of commuters walking to work and lining up to catch overcrowded buses. They lambasted the union for the “inconveniences” meanwhile forgetting to put forward the workers real reason for the strike. The strikes have now been put on hold and management has shifted its position and are willing to negotiate. There is some hope now at least of saving some of the jobs which were forecast to be axed. Without the willingness to take part in industrial action the earmarked jobs on the London Underground would have been axed. We can cite numerous examples in other industries here in Australia of the very same tactic. Strike action enhances rather than hinders the outcome for workers when their backs are against the wall.

We have to be prepared to resort to industrial action. If the NSW rail EBA 2014 in its current form is implemented it will be too late to do anything. We must act now.

Just imagine if we shut down the CBD for one day? It's not the same as the 60's, 70's or 80's when no one cared. Many more people and businesses rely on public transport today than they did in the past. There would be hue and cry from all quarters, which we should be anticipate.



Some staff are saying that “the unions are not strong anymore” or that they are weakened in some way. This is far from the truth. The transport unions are some of the strongest in the country, they have the best union density of any union movement in Australia. They have the power in the membership and they are strategically placed in an industry that cannot afford to be shut down from a business point of view. However the leadership lacks the will for a fight, preferring to place their faith in the election of a Labor Government at the next election, even though history has shown that this changes very little at all.

However, if this is what’s needed for management and the government to take us seriously, then that’s what we must do. It’s getting to the point when we have few options left. We are already haemorrhaging staff members and draconian workplace changes are taking their toll on everyone. In our workplaces we have no respect and relations between management and staff are at an all time low.

There is only one way to win back the respect we deserve. That does not mean that we should wait and vote for this or that political party. We need to organise and take action ourselves, sooner rather than later. Only then will we not look weak in the eyes of the Transport Minister and her cronies managing Sydney Trains and NSW Trains. Maybe we can even get them to budge. However we will never know what’s possible if we don’t try.

*By Angry Rail Worker*

## **Letter to the members of Sydney Trains and NSW Trains.**

**I would like to raise matters concerning the future of your jobs. Over the last twenty years we have all seen the deliberate destruction of what was once a major employer and the erosion of the morale of its workers.**

I was once proud to announce that I was a third generation rail worker. My brothers, my father, his brothers and both my grandfathers all were on the job. A job you knew was a secure job, for life with great prospects for advancement. My father raised twelve kids and built two houses on Guard’s wages. He was proud of what was once a family tradition and every mate he had, was met on the job or through it. How has it come to today where we wait each year to see how many more sections will disappear?

Remember juniors on stations, porters, swosas, hairy legs, shunters, telegram boys, parcel clerks, booking window clerks and all the other jobs connected to the rail that were the life-blood of the country towns. Now we have no prospects for any kind of career unless we become a manager and show how good we are at cutting out positions and saving money for an employer that treats its staff with utter contempt, by declaring in the media that they are all lazy and a waste of tax dollars. They see the only future is to get rid of us all and privatise and we all know how well that worked for all the other great employers of the past, like Telecom, the Post Office, Water Board, Gas Board, Electricity, etc. We all know how cheap all our bills are now, they all are run as corporate entities. We all paid our taxes and expected and received all those services in return. We did not expect them all to make massive profits or if not, then

cut out jobs and services. We expected them to employ our kids in real jobs with a future and the benefits that went with it. How are young people supposed to plan a future with part time jobs at twenty hours a week, where the hope of accumulating long service leave and a worthwhile superannuation is a pipe dream. They will need two jobs just to pay rent, as they will never get a house loan with jobs, that are only given on eighteen month contracts that may not be renewed, like many of the recent train cleaners positions.

Our employer has now shown us all, it's clear intentions to make more job cuts with the insistence that the policy of no forced redundancies and salary maintenance must go. They want to cut jobs and not have an expense

of looking after their obligations. We have seen year after year, of cuts under such names as Job and Work Redesign, Station Reform, Staff Reviews and Operational Changes. We were told these were all necessary to secure the future of the remaining jobs, but when is enough, going to be enough? Have any of the savings actually been ploughed back into infrastructure or has it just been to pay for the ever increasing management bureaucracy that thinks trains run on red tape and intricate corporate layers while investing in clever, beautiful brochures with colour photos of our glorious leaders on them.

The latest bit of wisdom is to have us throw away many millions of dollars, by throwing away our perfectly good uniforms. I myself had over forty shirts, twenty pairs of pants and all the other attire in perfect order, all this will be replaced with new, at the expense of a few more job cuts. I am sure this will make trains a safer option for travel and cheaper too. Before you all vote on the upcoming EBA agreements (Yes, two agreements not one, and if you think there is no hidden agenda behind separate agreements I will sell you a bridge from Melbourne to Hobart). Ask yourself, what good is a pay rise that may see you on the unemployment line. Do not accept an EBA just for a pay rise that may boost your superannuation, as you may find you no longer have a position to earn any super doing. Don't think it won't be you. I have heard some say it won't be

me, because they need full time employees to drive trains. Anybody old enough can remember the days of Sydney Buses that employed many people on many shifts. Ask around about what happened when split shifts were introduced. Massive job losses and those left with four hours in



the morning and four in the evening. They were not paid for the two hour or more break the middle of the day, which was wasted life for the most of them. Would you like to work a ten or twelve hour day for eight hours pay with trains, that run in peak times? How long will train lines such as Kiama to Nowra, Port Kembla to Wollongong, Moss Vale, Scone and Dungog to Newcastle remain? Any bus company will take over these sections like what happened to the lines West of the Blue Mountains.

Ask yourself why they need a “Facilitative Clause” in the EBA. It means whatever they don’t get in the EBA they will introduce once it is signed off. They will offer a once only payment to induce affected staff to vote for a measure that will be good for a few, who are ready to retire, but will cut jobs for any future employees. Ask the carriage cleaners about how underhanded tactics were used to pressure an agreement to new staff cuts by making offers done in private meetings with no representation. Some were given false information as to what they were agreeing to, but nothing was written down and no witnesses were there to attest to it. I warn you now, that any clauses put forward in this EBA should be treated warily.

Do you really believe that they are interested in delivering safe clean trains for the public and ensuring a future for you? Their consideration is the dismantling and privatisation of the railways. Why do you think they wanted multiple agreements? Divide and conquer! Tell your union a single agreement for a single united workforce is the only option. We should not accept two. Do not accept a reply of this is the best offer they will make. It is long past time our union says “enough already”. Will we wait until we don’t have the strength or numbers to stand up? If they can put in a clause that says they can come back and make more cuts and changes after the EBA is signed off, why can’t we put in a clause that says no more reforms for the life of the agreement? Demand your union fight for this and not just settle for the best management offer.

If we are not willing to fight now, we will prove to management that the back down before the Pope’s visit was proof of just how afraid you are to stand up for your job, your conditions and your future.

## **Sydney Trains has a new position for station staff**

**Sydney Trains has a new position for station staff that it wants to introduce via the upcoming EA. The position will be called a Customer Service Officer. It is proposed that this new position will:**

1. Be a multi skilled position.
2. Have no home station.
3. Replace current augmented relief positions.
4. Have working hours between 4 and 12 hours per day, at their discretion.
5. Be rostered between 20 and 60 hours per week, at their discretion.
6. Not attract any penalty rates, until a yearly quota is reached.

Sydney Trains say this about being flexible to meet our customer’s needs, but we already have that in place with Relief CSA’s and SDM’s. This is really about slashing the conditions of employment that we currently have. This proposal is akin to having a casual position that attracts no penalties or travelling expense claims. It will also create a distinct division be-

tween station staff, effectively carrying out the same job. The proposed Customer Service Officer position does not detail whether it will be salary, wages or contract. It also does not specify whether it impacts CSA's or SDM's. Some of the details of this proposal can be found by looking at Government Proposal 5 General Rostering and Deployment Arrangements. The upcoming EA is your EA. Be aware of exactly what Sydney Trains is proposing. Get active and get involved with your union. Contact your local delegate and let them know what you want. Solidarity, knowledge and patience are our best defence against attacks on our conditions.

## **Privatisation! It Just Doesn't Work**

**It now seems that Transfield's contract with Sydney Trains has now been cancelled. Station Cleaning will come back under the control of the various Customer Service Managers, while train cleaning will revert back to the management of Fleet Maintenance.**

In 2011 Transfield won a huge contract to manage Transport cleaning services for all of NSW Public Transport from 24-Oct-2012 to 23-Apr-2016.

Transfield also have major contracts with other States and National Agencies. The contract with the Department of Services, Technology and Administration Services, for example, is worth A\$540 million and the contract with the Australian Government for the incarceration of asylum seekers on Manus and Nauru Islands is worth A\$1.2 billion. This is just the tip of the iceberg as far as the extent to which Transfield gained lucrative State contracts around the globe.

While managing transport cleaning Transfield's management was invisible to most people, even though on paper they had a bureaucratic structure that exceeded the old transport hierarchy. Since gaining the original contract for trains and stations, cleaners and cleaning have lacked direction. As a consequence both trains and stations have become filthy.

The public transport cleaners from the old RailCorp have suffered as a result. They have had many offers of redundancy over the years and have had the sword of privatisation hanging over their heads for the last 2 years. Redundancies are still on the table for cleaning staff even though they won't be transferred over to Transfield now. It is likely they will be replaced by part time and casual employees in the longer term.

The privatisation of Sydney Water shows what can happen when public utilities are privatised. The sale of Sydney Water added to the corruption of politicians within the NSW and Federal political system. The people of NSW were ripped off by unscrupulous businessmen and politicians who fed from the public purse. Householders in NSW picked up the tab and water charges skyrocketed. So far not one of these crooks have been prosecuted. Barry O'Farrell surrendered his job, yet received no charges. Yes, "NSW is" definitely "open for business" and the criminals got away with the booty.





Unions and their members need to draw a “line in the sand” over the privatisation of public assets. We need to begin a campaign now in our communities, on stations and wherever privatisation raises its ugly head. We could start by having an awareness campaign using posters and leaflets. A campaign that leads up to democratic public meetings. Union members and others need to volunteer to hand out the leaflets, flyers and posters. The final line of defence against privatisation is industrial action which we must never back away from. Privatisation is nothing more than theft, pure and simple, and we are the ones that they are stealing from.

*By Concerned Railway Employee*

### **Call for industrial action and state-wide delegates meeting to build the fight to reject the budget**

The Liberal National government’s proposed budget is one of the biggest attacks on workers and welfare in the last 30 years. The attacks are aimed at pushing a user pays, market logic further into education, healthcare and welfare, to cut essential services and rights.

Abbott has made clear he is also looking to scrap the minimum wage and penalty rates.

There is massive public opposition to Abbott and the Liberal government. The 20,000 at Melbourne's stop work rally showed the potential to beat Abbott. We need to strike hard now to stop the budget while we still can.

We can't rely on the budget being blocked in the Senate or wait two years for the next federal election.

John Howard was almost a one-term wonder, but the anger against his first term attacks was allowed to dissipate and he stayed on for 13 years.

Unions NSW has initiated an important all-unions and community rally on Sunday July 6.

But Abbott's budget is an attack on all workers, and it will take all our unions, and mass opposition and strike action to fight it.

We need a rank-and-file run campaign to reject the budget.

The unions' Your Rights at Work campaign, that was central to defeating the Howard Liberal government, had workplace and local campaign groups and most importantly mass national days of action and strikes.

Crucially, the strikes and mass rallies of hundreds of thousands of workers were built out of mass delegates' meetings of thousands.

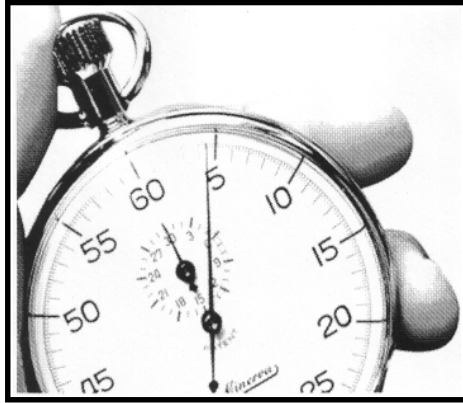
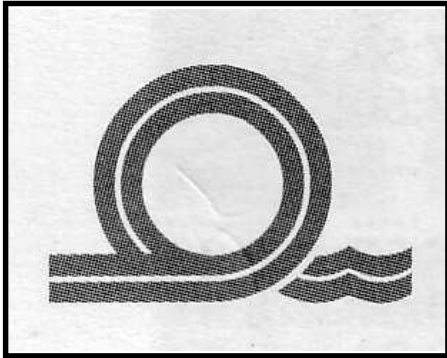
The well-attended delegates meeting organised by Unions NSW on June 12 unfortunately did not discuss amendments for further industrial action but support for this was clear.

We need further mass delegates meetings to plan the next steps in the campaign.

We the undersigned call on our unions and Unions NSW to:

1. Organise another daytime mass delegates meeting of all unions the week after July 6 to plan for a NSW-wide strike; and
2. Call a week-day stop work protest against the budget and co-ordinate with the ACTU and other state union peak bodies to turn this into a national day of action.

INITIAL SIGNATORIES: Susan Price (NTEU); Nick Riemer (NTEU); Jim McIlroy (retired CPSU); Liam Cohrs (MUA); Pip Hinman (NTEU); Joanne Faulkner (NTEU); John Gauci (NSWTF); Michael Karadjis (NTEU); Raul Bassi (TWU delegate); Andrew Chuter (NTEU); Noreen Navin (NSWTF); Anabel Morales Nogues (PSA Central Councillor); Howard Byrnes (CFMEU state councillor, cttee management construction division delegate); Sarah Gregson (President NTEU UNSW); Sharlene Leroy-Dyer (NSW Division Indigenous Representative on the Indigenous Policy Committee (NTEU)); Peter Perkins (National Assistant Secretary (Railway Sector) RBTU); Mark Goudkamp (NSWTF); John Morris (NSWTF); Stephen Stephenac, CPSU delegate, Bureau of Meteorology; Jean Parker (NTEU); Kevin Lin (NTEU); Matt Meagher (NSWTF); Clare Fester (NUW); Jimmy Yan (NUW); Steve O'Brien (PSA/CPSU delegate); Shane Bentley (MUA Sydney); Mich-Elle Myers (MUA Sydney); Vin Francis (MUA Sydney); Campbell Duguan (MUA); Doug Heath (MUA); Adrian Evans (MUA); Paul Keating (MUA); Damien Martin (MUA); Garry Keane (MUA); Greg Tarlinton (MUA); Luke Miller (MUA); Antonin Stonjek (MUA); Taniith Sweetnam (MUA); Erina Daymond (MUA); Paul Maney (MUA); Warren Nugent (MUA); Anne Picot (NTEU); Evan Gray (NSW Teachers' Federation, NUS); Brad Tarlington (MUA); Yarni Stephens (CPSU);



## The Greatest Story Ever Told

“I’ll tell a tale sure to please of a grand race of the State Transit Demolition Derby. Where all the best buses from all the depots parade in the field compete for prizes and shields.”

Thus announced Peter Rowley STA CEO to his remarkable band of depot bosses and Admin. Staff, as he ascended the grand stand.

Rowley lustily chuckled, “The rules? There are no rules for us! Everyone is the winner who gets the most out of drivers. The big prize is a studio cosily near my place in Hunters Hill. The consolation prize is dinner for two with Gladys, the Transport Minister, followed by the exclusive use of the Transport Ministry Penthouse supplied with satin sheets....”

This year’s event has drawn a big crowd, for the betting was even. Rowley and the Depot bosses were expecting to double their bonuses with their bets and rubbed their hands with glee!

The program is in perfect form.

Rowley said “Go!”

The graphs and stop watches were out!



*“Our productivity is up 23%...  
Just enough to keep up with management foul-ups.”*

Hundreds of depot staff with clip boards, rushed off to depot gates and terminuses! Warning letters to scare drivers were fired off!

“Let the best depot win!” Shouted Rowley.

The tipster, that mysterious James, the Albert Speer of the STA, new wiz bang management techniques, tipped the depots with the harshest bosses.

The gallop is on! The front runner with the most ruthless management won out!

Waverley followed by Pt. Botany were front runners!

The race will only end with the implosion of the STA. There will be no more depots, but casinos. Featuring huge graphs displayed with flashing neon lights. Where drivers are just numbers in the neo-liberal game.

The overworked drivers who had run the race had a celebration party with St. Peter at his pearly gates!

## STA BUSIE NEWS

### WAVERLEY DEPOT NEWS

#### **Sparks: What the latest developments with Newcastle Buses?**

Waverley Busie: Recently I have received some important info from a contact in Forest Buses. He advised that Gladys has been making some sly behind the scenes moves. Newcastle Buses have been detached from Sydney Buses and is now self funding. Whilst the tender for Newcastle Buses comes up for review in 12 months time, just after the upcoming NSW state elections. This contact advised that the likely company to take the tender is Scott Dunn, a cashed up UK based company, out to acquire various tenders. It just recently purchased Telfords.

#### **Sparks: What's the latest with the bosses?**

WB: I have noticed that the office staff now mainly consist of young people in the late 20's and 30's, who the higher bosses have equipped with menacing, highly polished “Hitler Youth” style jack books. There appear be no older experienced people there. In the morning when you start the job there is always one or two of them, waiting for you out in the yard, as part of a new campaign of harassment. If we are even a few minutes late leaving the depot or terminuses, the bosses may send warning letters over the issue to scare us. Associated with this campaign, the bosses have posted people at the gate and terminuses, checking buses departing. In the office, I have noticed coloured graphs showing percentages of drivers leaving the depot and terminuses on time. On the graph a line showed 92% leaving on time and another line showed 94%. The bosses want to get 98% leaving on time. This latest attack follows the notorious “Optimisation” concept implementation. Its believed, the architect of the successive waves of this onslaught is a former business manager, you know who I mean James, who acts like a megalomaniac. The bosses have even barged into Opal Card training meetings to peddle their lateness crack down crap!



*"Your idea was fool-proof. It just wasn't management-proof."*

**Sparks: What do you see as the bosses' hidden agenda behind this latest viciousness?**

WB: This ridiculous attempt to "micro manage" our job, to the extent of fretting about a few minutes lateness, seems in reality all about creating the pretext for disciplinary action against us. It fails to take account of various causes for delayed departures, which are out of drivers' control. We have only 10 minutes to prepare for the start of our runs. In that time they want us to sign for the bus (what is the point anyway? As we are not being required to sign off for the bus at the end of the shift. The whole idea is just pathetic!), start the bus, check for faults and check the Opal data and GPS connections are working. Many of these factors are out of our control or just forgetting the keys, can contribute to delays in leaving the depot. By means of this intense scrutiny of our jobs for a disciplinary dividend, it's alleged the bosses want to sack full time permanent drivers and replace them with part timers and casuals. It's also alleged that the bosses have a "hit list" of drivers who they consider to be "trouble makers" and want to fit up for the sack. Despite many of these drivers having good records and having 10 years plus on the job. However, not all staff are gung ho in participating in this viciousness. Some of the staff appear to be quite embarrassed. The use of the lateness crack down to put black marks on records is also a way to discriminate against us in say the list for bendibus jobs. Qualification for such jobs should be based on seniority, not merit. My approach is to work for the passengers and oppose this latest management campaign to make us jump through more pointless hoops.

I am particularly outraged by this increased peering over our shoulder and the bosses ulterior motives behind it. As drivers, we have a huge responsibility in dealing with the public and are subjected on the road to ever worsening conditions. Contributed by the lax policing of laws. Particularly, we have problems with cyclists, some of whom lack safety equipment such as

red lights and pedestrians engrossed in their mobile phones. We often have to second guess the likely next moves of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. Recently, 2-3 people have died in the city due to collisions with buses. We should be applauded, as our skill in driving has avoided dangers and a multitude of people being killed. We should be cherished, rather than submitted to vilification due to “Big Brother” GPS monitoring and the silliness of the bosses fretting over minutes leaving the depot for runs. I’m sure a similar onslaught is affecting other depots. The other day, I came across a bloke who was handing out cards for a “bus drivers’ day”. So we can be given credit for our efforts on the road. Let’s take up this idea!

I have heard similar successive waves of attacks are affecting other parts of Transport for NSW, such as the railways, private buses and the ferries. In the case of the ferries, a big dispute has recently broken out over a new vicious attack. Following a “honeymoon” after privatisation, the new operators are now demanding a large pay cut to ferry workers wages! There was a similar big attack on bus drivers in Adelaide, following privatisation twenty years ago. The new operators imposed a pay cut of \$10,000 pa, which works out to be \$18,000 pa today! How do I know this? Following privatisation, these drivers who had been in our union, transferred to the TWU. Recently the TWU have demanded a hefty pay rise for these drivers.

### **INTEGRITY: THE BOTTOM LINE**

#### **Sparks: What do you see as other aspects of this new boss attack?**

WB: I think it’s a resurgence of the punishment regime we experienced under the Greiner Government 18 years ago, when the bosses were keen to fine us over any trivial thing. It also expresses the general lack of integrity of the bosses. Without integrity you have nothing. If things like this continue in the STA, the whole thing will just collapse. This lack of integrity is occurring on various scales in NSW. At the political level, in the Baird Government down to Peter Rowley STA CEO and to the lower rungs of depot administration. We have seen how the Liberal politicians such as Hartcher, have been enmeshed in a web of corruption via slush funds. Former, Premier O’Farrell, a fairly popular leader was implicated in the bottle of wine affair and lost his job. Whilst, 4 to 5 years ago, Rowley as CEO must be held responsible for the sacking of Chris Mansergh, involving a web of deceit associated with him being fitted up for the sack. Chris had been elected as union rep at Pt. Botany and had been effective in assisting the grass roots in the fight against bosses, particularly by holding frequent yard meetings. Consequently, he was a thorn in the side of the bosses and union officials. As a result of the depot staff involvement in these constant attacks us, with the exception of the inspectors, it shows they are all rotten to the core.

The successive waves of the campaign has increased the intimidation, frustration and aggravation of drivers. It raises the whole question of what they are there for. Are they there to thrash us or to seize an opportunity? In regard to the latter option, some years back there was a competition between depots to reduce fuel consumption. The drivers at the winning depot which was Waverley, received \$100 each for their efforts. As a result, enthusiasm for the job was encouraged. This is the sort of thing the bosses could be encouraging, rather than their current ruthless authoritarian approach to us.

**Sparks: What do you see as ways to tackle this intensified attack involving Auxiliary Staff, including roster clerks, peer support people and Human Resources Staff?**

WB: I propose we issue them with a survey consisting of four questions, with a deadline for them to complete and return it. Some suggestions for questions include: Q1: How can you improve your understanding of us? Q2: How do rate us as supervisors of our work? Q3: How can you assist us in performing our work? Q4: How do you see us in the future of the STA?

**Sparks: What has been some of the fallout from the bosses corner cutting, speed up and intensification of the job?**

WB: To save money the bosses don't want to deal with the gas buses, which require more maintenance than other buses. Consequently, the Kingsgrove gas system has been closed. Whilst Tempe and Waverley are getting gas buses from Kingsgrove. As a result of low wages due to curbs on overtime and redundancies, more mechanics are leaving the STA contributing to more faulty buses. Now with the elimination of many inspector jobs, we are reliant for advice from the radio room, which are often out of touch with the practicalities of our on the road problems.



In the new May rosters, the bosses made various computer generated changes which have tightened up our shifts. In the case of AM shifts they are being scrambled around a lot, with some of these shifts being shortened to only 7 hours! Whilst a stack of brokeners are starting earlier resulting in \$40pw cuts in drivers' pay packets. The number of straight day shifts has been reduced. Consequently the bosses are gouging additionally, perhaps thousands of dollars a week, out of us. All WAD has been cut out and only here and there are gaps between runs in shifts. Combined with the bosses intimidation of us over lateness leaving the depot and terminuses, the roster changes have greatly tightened the screws of the speed up on our jobs. We are also continuing to face glitches with the Opal Card system and the Green Machines at the start of runs, which are out of our control. Causing more tired and fatigued drivers, with many encouraged to leave the job. This is a completely wrong approach to run the STA, the bosses should be working with us, not against us. The union and bosses should be monitoring the fatigue this onslaught is causing us.

With the Federal Budget, there will be more pressure on the state government to attack us. So we can expect even more of these cutbacks in the pipeline. Over the last 10 to 15 years, enormous cutbacks to the STA have been delivered. All the fat on the STA was cut out, and now under the Liberals, it's been reduced to a skeleton. Virtually the heart is being taken out of the job. Currently the experienced drivers are holding the STA together, not the bosses. They don't know what they want. The passengers are definitely on our side, they can see how frustrated we are. It's likely one day, the STA will just implode, due to all this hollowing out. Gladys doesn't know what she's doing. She doesn't know whether she is Arthur or Mather and what a monster she is creating!

**Sparks: What are your impressions of the NSW Govt. expenditure on new public transport infrastructure and technology?**

WB: I recently noticed at Eastgardens, near Westfield, a depot is being constructed for the Light Rail system. How is this and the new Opal Card being funded? It's being funded by such measures as cut backs to our wages and reductions in mechanical staff!

**Sparks: What do you think of the new campaign by the Govt, bosses and the media against workers wages and conditions and the environment?**

WB: Alarmingly, even some drivers have been taken in by this propaganda. One driver the other day was complaining that our wages are too high! The media and the Abbott Government, particularly spread misinformation about the wages of GMH workers, grossly inflating the amount. Saying they were all getting \$34 per hour, to support the move to close down the auto industry. Whilst, the small business association and other business associations are complaining about going broke over a 50c per hour pay rise recently awarded to low wage workers and demanding penalty rates are reduced. In the case of Abbott's Budget, so much of the attacks on us are hidden in the fine details of the budget papers. Abbott is also using the Royal Commission into union corruption, to create a broad brush to paint all unions as corrupt. Abbott is taking us back 30 years on environmental issues with the budget cutbacks. However, the Liberal NSW Govt. is continuing with policies to reduce pollution, which were introduced by the previous ALP Govt.

**Sparks: What new mischief is the Baird Govt. getting up to?**



WB: Latest news, is that Transport for NSW wants to charge us \$80 each to get a certificate that we work with children! It's affecting both public and private sector transport workers. This money should come out of the STA's finances, not our pockets. The union has advised not to pay it, until next year. The issuing of this certificate looks to be a way TfNSW bureaucrats are trying to cover themselves due to changes in legislation requirements.

### **LEICHHARDT DEPOT NEWS**

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

Leichhardt Busie: For a month or so now, the bosses have been pursuing a new campaign, involving checking times buses are leaving the depot. It seems, it's all about the bosses doing something new to look good. It won't change our running times. I have had the experience of leaving the depot early and arriving at the terminus to start the run late. In the main room at the depot, the bosses have put up a white board with graphs displaying leaving times. The other week there was an interesting industrial action at Busways involving tackling the problem of unrealistic running times. It was organised by the TWU. It entailed drivers doing their normal runs, but not picking up commuters, with the media on board. To show to the public how unrealistic the current running times are.

#### **Sparks: What else is happening with running times.**

LB: The STA is loading up the first half of our shifts with over 5 hours of work. According to Transport regulations we are supposed to have a break after 5 hours. However, due to late running we are exceeding the 5 hours. If you call the radio room, they demand you have a crib break, rather than cutting the run. As a result, drivers are having their lunch break cut. It seems with the new May rosters, the schedulers are seizing any opportunity to trim running times. As a result of this dirty work, the schedulers are being paid off with bonuses. The bosses are still after our Sunday work and want more part timers and casuals. They may have to ship them in from overseas, as the last casuals we have had, have not been seen again, as they couldn't cope with the job. The bosses no doubt will be spurred on by the example of Abbott to want to cut our penalty rates in the upcoming enterprise agreement.

### **BURWOOD DEPOT NEWS**

#### **Sparks: What's the latest developments with the bosses' part timer push?**

Burwood Driver: Some of the most alarming news is that management wants to impose on us new part time shifts from 8/6/14. It's happening throughout the STA. This has been on their agenda for some time. In the past, the bosses have openly tried to introduce it, now they are proceeding in an underhanded fashion. They have converted a number of lines of work for full time shifts into part time shifts of 5,6 and 7 hours. In contrast to permanent shifts, those drivers on part time shifts are put on individual contracts. At the end of the contract, if the bosses decide you're not performing enough, your contract may not be renewed and you are effectively sacked. By this approach, drivers are being compelled to go on the part time shifts. If they refuse, they will be effectively sacked.

There has been quite a furore over this new push by the bosses, and the union hierarchy in their typically legalistic approach have notified the bosses of a dispute, which will go to court.

However, the court case will occur later in June, so effectively the union bosses are allowing this new attack on us to be implemented.

**Sparks: What the latest with the bosses' push for checking buses leaving the depot?**

BD: As part of the new duties for managers is the checking the times buses leave the depot. They focus on the AM and PM peaks and mid days. Most drivers are not too concerned by this new initiative. As they normally leave on time, except in the case of unforeseen delays. It seems that the management thinking behind the new push, is that if the first run of the shift commences on time, subsequent runs will also be alright. It's a totally unrealistic approach.

**Sparks: How is the new manager faring?**

BD: Years back, when she was second in command at the depot, she was a bit of tyrant. However, since becoming the top boss, she appears to have acquired a maturity and even handedness. Other news is that Brendan, our previous union rep, before Mark D. has returned to the depot.

## Victorian Railway News

*In this issue of Sparks, we will discuss the termination of an employee at a country depot. This is a story of back stabbing and the determination of Human Resources to terminate this employee. Once again Drivers, Station Staff, Conductors and Head Office staff will discuss this issue. As in previous issues of Sparks names have been changed.*

**Sparks: Can you tell us why this employee was terminated?**

Clarence: Yes, they wanted to put the fear into other employees, that Human Resources were in charge.

Rastus and Roscoe: We, drivers have heard rumours of a station manager, who was a bully at this location.

Jethro: You are correct. This person was appointed from outside.

**Sparks: How did he get the job?**

Jethro: He was a mate of the previous Regional Manager. He worked in the retail industry, where it was alleged he used to bully junior employees. He left his job under a cloud and his mate at V/Line made sure he obtained the position.

**Sparks: Can you tell us about this Regional Manager?**

Roscoe: He came from Human Resources, where he was a PIG. We drivers hated him. He got the position through his mates at Human Resources over other employees.

Sheona: They wanted a Yes man.

Rastus: He knew nothing of the Rail Industry.

**Sparks: Why did he leave V/Line?**

Clarence: He resigned under a cloud because it was alleged that he sent an email to an employee by mistake. You see the email was one of his bright ideas was to cut costs at this depot.

**Sparks: What was his bright idea?**

Sheona: It was to replace full time conductors with part time conductors. Also it was alleged that in this email, was a recommendation to terminate an employee.

Jethro: When the union found out all hell broke loose, which eventually led to this manager's resignation.

Rastus and Roscoe: His mates in Human Resources found him a position at Yarra Trams, where he is now depot manager at Camberwell Depot.

Jethro: He is at Camberwell Depot, where he is hated.

**Sparks: Hope the employees there stand up to him.**

Rastus and Roscoe: Meanwhile talk at this depot is that the Station Manager was bullying conductors and trying to standover drivers. He particularly picked on the weak employees.

Clarence: One employee stood up to him and would not submit to him or cop his bullying.

Rastus: This employee was a conductor plus a holiday relief clerk at the station.

**Sparks: Why was he terminated?**

Clarence: He was set up and was terminated on four charges. These charges were: 1. Passenger complaint. 2. Mishandling money. 3. Insubordination. 4. Discussing the previous three issues with fellow employees.

The first charge was false, as the conductor was very good to his passengers. As for the second charge, this conductor never stole money. This charge was never proven. In regards to insubordination, this is rubbish. This was trumped up because he stood up to this bully. Finally. He was no thief.

Rastus and Roscoe: As for the forth charge, he discussed his charges with fellow employees. We said in previous issues of SPARKS to talk charges over with fellow employees.

Sheona: They try to keep matters of discipline secret so as not to arouse fellow employees.

Clarence: In other words hush it up. This conductor had the guts to discuss the charges with fellow workers.

Sheona: He was stood down with pay.

Jethro: Yes and the case dragged on for three weeks.



Rastas and Roscoe: They certainly know how to waste money. I think of the overtime budget at this depot plus the number of relief people sent by other depots.

Sheona: They don't care, as long as they nail a person.

**Sparks: When this matter was known, other employees should have refused to work on their book off days.**

Rastus: They should have, but Human Resources through these crawlers on the job, put out rumours that these people are in the wrong and there are selfish people who would work regardless of the matter. There was an issue years ago where employees stood up for a stood down employee, but these crawlers sabotaged other efforts.

Clarence: As for the stood down employee the time he was stood down was causing stress for his family.

Sheona: It would, sitting around doing nothing.

Jethro: Finally, they held an enquiry where they found the charges proven.

**Sparks: What happened?**

Rastus: When a new CEO was appointed to V/Line, who wanted to put fear among employees, said terminate the person and this is what happened.

**Sparks: What did the union do?**

Clarence: Because this person was a member of the union and as well as this station officer also had been a member of the union, the union had to handle the case with a fine line.

Jethro: The employee took his case to FAIRWORK AUSTRALIA on unfair dismissal. It was heard with the union representing him. The employee wanted to clear his name and wanted his job back. The hearing was held and he was cleared of the mishandling of money.

Clarence: V/Line would not give him, his job back, but he got a substantial payment.

Rastus: Would you want to go back, as they would find something to terminate you.

**Sparks: Has the matter of this station officer been sought out?**

Clarence: No. He kept his job despite the way he treated employees and if he can get away with it, he still tries to stand over employees.

Jethro: Employees should ignore him.

**Sparks: This matter should have been sought out from day one.**

Rastus: It should have, but Human Resources would not listen. You see, they appointed him and to remove him, they would have to admit they made a mistake.

**Sparks: This person has caused enough trouble and a way should be found to remove him. Not be dismissed, but a transfer to another depot. If he causes trouble there, then remove him.**

Rastus and Roscoe: In having the final say, this manager should be removed. This would solve problems at this depot. It may be illegal, but it would solve the problem. As for the terminated employee, he should have gone to another depot. He would have got support. The worse part of this, is the stress the stand down caused to his family. Finally, as we have said in previ-

ous editions of Sparks, if facing a disciplinary hearing, discuss the matter with fellow workers. As for Human Resources, they STINK!

## **INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS NEWS**

### **Brazil Bus Drivers Resort to Direct Action!**

**23/5/14 Sao Paulo (AFP) - Commuters in Sao Paulo faced huge traffic jams and lingering uncertainty Thursday, but the Brazilian metropolis was slowly returning to normal after a paralysing bus drivers' strike.**

The two-day protest stranded more than a million passengers and unleashed transit chaos on the economic hub of Brazil, which hosts the opening match of the World Cup in just three weeks.

Most buses were running again after city officials and the transport union reached a deal with drivers to end the strike at midnight. Commuters, however, still faced stalled traffic stretching 170 kilometres (more than 100 miles) — a morning rush hour record in this sprawling city of 20 million people. “The bus terminals aren’t closed anymore, but it’s been slow going to re-establish service,” a city transit spokesman said. Media reports said some holdout drivers threw stones at buses, while others continued to strike in four suburbs in the greater metropolitan area. About 300 striking bus drivers and fare collectors marched to the mayor’s office to demand a meeting with Haddad the Mayor. Other drivers stopped their buses in the middle of the street and asked their passengers to get off, said newspaper O Estado de Sao Paulo.

The drivers were rebelling against their own union, which had agreed to a 10-percent pay increase in negotiations with management. They were still demanding to meet Mayor Fernando Haddad later Thursday, and a group of drivers remained camped outside his offices. But Haddad told journalists he was waiting for a labor court ruling on whether the strike was legal before meeting with drivers.

### **Transport in major European cities has been disrupted by strikes affecting taxis and rail services.**

**11/6/14**

**Taxi drivers blocked roads in Paris, Madrid, London, Milan, Berlin and other cities in protest against the rise of services booked using smartphone apps.**

They say there has been a lack of regulation concerning rival mobile service Uber.

Travellers in France were also hit by a rail strike that stopped two-thirds of trains in some areas.

The biggest taxi associations in the Spanish capital asked their drivers to observe a 24-hour stoppage until 06:00 on Thursday. More than 15,000 licensed vehicles operate in Madrid, Spanish media say.

No taxis were visible at Barajas airport or Atocha station, reports said, despite Uber not yet being available in the capital. At one point, a car suspected of being a private taxi came under attack from demonstrators.



The strike was also observed in Barcelona, where the mobile app is in operation.

Trafalgar Square Drivers of London's famous black cabs demonstrated in Trafalgar Square, arguing that the Uber mobile app, which originated in the US, was tantamount to a taxi meter, which only black cabs are legally entitled to use in London.

"We're governed by a set of rules and they don't seem to apply to Uber," said Glenn Chapman, a driver parked in a long line of cabs outside Downing Street.

Uber argues it is complying with local regulations.

Transport for London estimated that about 4,000 drivers had taken part and roads were gridlocked around Parliament Square, Whitehall and Trafalgar Square.

In Milan, in northern Italy, a protest took place throughout Wednesday, although disruption was not on the same scale as elsewhere, with boycotts of key sites such as railway stations and squares. Cab drivers also staged demonstrations in Rome and Naples.

Protests also took place in several German cities, including Berlin and Hamburg.

But the worst of the disruption was in Paris, where train services were also badly affected by strike action.

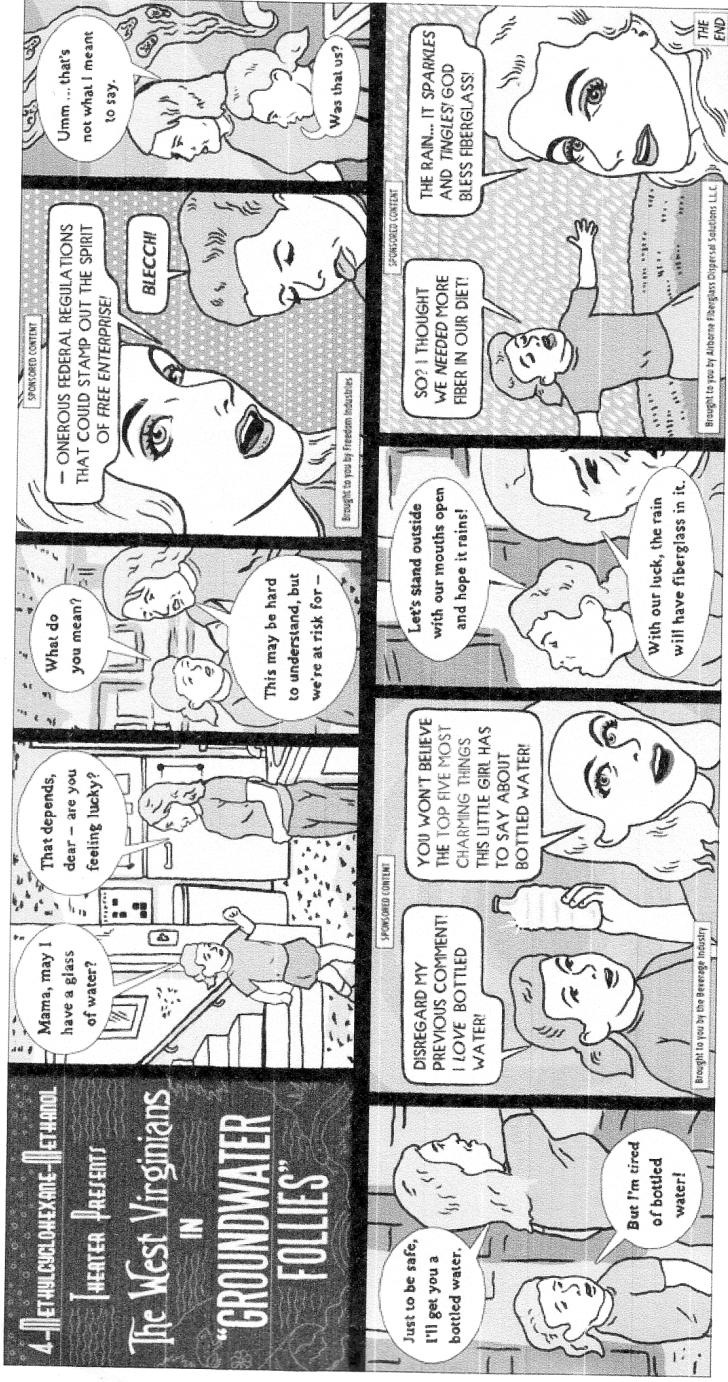
Hundreds of drivers blocked the French capital's airports and staged a "go-slow" during the morning rush hour.

Only one in three trains was running in the Paris region, although Eurostar services were unaffected.

Unions are objecting to plans to merge the rail network operator with the train company SNCF. The company said some 28% of railway staff had walked out.

The strike is due to continue until Thursday evening, unless union representatives and the transport minister reach an agreement in talks late on Wednesday.

BBC



## 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:

- I. 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 - Fighting for Membership  
Control of the Union & Direct Action!**

**Web Site:**

**Users.tpg.com.au/retepsni/MembersVoice**

**Email: membersvoice2010@yahoo.com**

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