

No.139

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# Sparks

THE RANK-AND-FILE TRANSPORT WORKERS' PAPER

**THE NEW WARATAHS PRESENT TWO  
OPTIONS TO TRAIN GUARDS: DIRECT  
ACTION TO MAINTAIN THE DUTIES OF THE  
JOB OR BEING SWEEPED INTO THE QUICK  
SAND OF DRIVER ONLY OPERATION!**



NSW RAIL NEWS;  
O'FARRELL & PRIVATISATION;  
VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS;  
PT REFORMS HIJACKING;  
BUS RADAR BLITZ;  
TRAIN GUARDS' NEWS;

STA BUSIE NEWS;  
MARITIME TRANSPORT;  
PT FAT CAT SALARIES;  
NSW ELECTION RESULT;  
TRANSPORT NSW;  
EGYPT PT NEWS;

## EDITORIAL

Welcome to another edition of Sparks.

Some of the most important news lately has been of course the election of the O'Farrell Liberal Government in the NSW elections. Its already making moves to privatise the Ferries via franchising. Highlighting its intentions for the fast tracking of privatisation of public transport and elsewhere in the public sector. Associated with such a push is the lowering of the standard of living of the grass roots and our families and the weaving of ever more webs of corruption and rorts involving the bosses and their business mates. (See article Page 3.)

In the current RailCorp Enterprise Agreement which was brazenly sold via staff meetings with the connivance of the Rightwing ALP union hierarchy, there was a vague mention of acceptance of the new Waratah Trains. Now guards have learnt the harsh news that the introduction of the new trains is very much about curtailing their duties and later down the track throwing them off the job. The changes to HR regulations which the union officials completely caved in on around the time of the Enterprise Agreement so called approval, which reduce to 26 weeks the maximum amount of redundancy lump sums, certainly will help the bosses in their machinations for the guards. Only daring direct action at this stage in the game can tackle the threat. (See article Page 2.)

In State Transit, the election of the O'Farrell Govt. has been associated with a new wave of harassment by the bosses involving the deployment of high tech measures such as radar to monitor bus speeds. No doubt a softening up measure in line with bigger attacks later down the road. What are the new Bus Division union officials doing about it? (See Article Page 9)

**Sparks welcomes contributions by transport workers please send to PO Box 92 Broadway 2007 NSW or via our web site [www.sparksworld.org](http://www.sparksworld.org) Subs are \$5 for a year's sub.**

### GUARDS' NEWS

I think mention should be made of RailCorp's attempts, in regard to the Waratah trains to remove the guard's whistle from the guard's duties. As well they are planning to remove the duties of guards involving watching their

trains onto the platform. This is another step in removing the train guards completely off trains. It will be putting a lot of stress on guards to watch for the safety of passengers approaching and departing the platform. The bosses are also claiming to have done thousands of kilometres of testing on the Waratah train, but as yet they have not performed testing on the Guards duties relating to opening the doors and viewing the CCTV cameras. We are going to be given the new train and have 20 days of testing to decide if we accept it. Certainly not acceptable to the guards.

**STOP PRESS** New and continuing issues with the Waratah is the role of the guard with Platforms in the city circle tunnels, the amount of time RailCorp is providing to train, train crews for the new Waratah and wanting to stop the guard watching the train onto the platform and restricting the guard blowing his warning whistle. The bosses are also still wanting to reduce weekend work for train crews. *Concerned Guard*

# Why We Fight Privatisation

*By Crimson Coconut*

The incoming NSW Liberal Government has signalled that it has Public Sector workers in its sights. It continues the process of the outgoing Labor Government which blazed a trail by selling off electricity generation, public transport, rail freight, transport maintenance, roads, water, education and many other services which have now been lost from the public sphere.

Barry O'Farrell's announcement that the Libs were going to circumvent collective bargaining, deny trade unions the right to bargain on behalf of their members and partially absolve employers from compensation claims shows just how far this government is prepared to go. On the other hand it shows how unprepared public sector trade union leaderships are to combat a move such as this. Did no one see O'Farrell's Governments industrial relations move coming?

Weaknesses in the Fair Work legislation are also being shown up by the NSW Libs first attack on workers rights. The Federal Government's Fair Work legislation is not the overarching protective umbrella of workers rights that we are told that it is.

O'Farrell's strategy to weaken the trade union movement is not just about having a defeated labour movement, though that is essential to his governments long range goals. The plan is to weaken workers so that privatisation and outsourcing can take place without hindrance, making potential buyouts lucrative for the corporate sector.

In almost all cases the privatisation of government services is disastrous for working people. One has to look no further than the part privatisation of Telsra and its fall from grace as a world class communications giant.

Another example is the building of private roads and toll-roads at the expense of public transport. Now workers pay exorbitant fees to travel in their cars and trucks over what should be publicly owned roads.

The pre-privatisation process of the railways here in NSW has seen many of the institutions that benefit rail workers closed down.

As they found in Britain, this was the precursor to final privatisation. In Britain, staff savings banks, convalescent homes for rail staff and the internal railway telephone (the second largest network after British Telecom) and data comms networks were all closed overnight. An excellent article on the process of privatisation of British Rail can be found at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Privatisation\\_of\\_British\\_Rail](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Privatisation_of_British_Rail)

Here the NSW Rail Institute which provided many services such as clubs, sporting and social groups has been sold off with its buildings. The Welfare Fund (a fund which looks after rail workers in need by providing cash and assistance) continues to struggle after support was withdrawn by the government.

Within RailCorp assistance schemes (within Health Services) such as those providing counselling services to employees and other Employee Assistance Programs have been outsourced to private companies and individuals.

A few years ago the NSW Government Railways housed low income rail workers and migrant workers and their families in railway flats at Chullora and a few other places around the state. In 1957 the Sydney Morning Herald wrote an apt description of the accommodation provided.

*“In a crowded, run down shanty town at Chullora, 1500 New Australian men, women and children live as tenants of the New South Wales Department of Railways in 640 huts each on 10 feet by 9 feet.*

*Nearby in 136 bigger huts, Australian workers live in accommodation whilst better than the 10 feet by 9 feet huts is still substandard.*

*In the smaller huts where one room serves as bedroom, living room, kitchenette and often bathroom, too, New Australians with as many as 4 children live miserably in an atmosphere of hopeless frustration.*

*Their embarrassed landlord, the NSW Railways, is not proud of the Chullora Camp. To its lasting regret the Department built these huts years ago to house single men coming to work in the city from the country, or arriving from overseas.*

*But the single men over the years acquired wives and families and now only 140 of the huts house single men. The other 500 huts laid out 15 feet apart in long straight rows are home to some of the unhappiest people in Sydney.....”*

*“Pride of possession among the chalet owners shows up in trim lawns, fruit trees, painted fences, polished lino and decorated house names hung outside. I asked the first chalet tenant I saw if he was content with life in the camp.*

*“I’m very happy,” he said. “Anyone who tried to rent a house in Sydney would be glad to live here. I wouldn’t care to live in one of the hutments, but this will do me.””*

The governments response was predictable. Instead of upgrading or providing better low cost housing, rail worker tenants were forced to seek rental accommodation in the private sector or buy a place of their own. The flats were shut down and the land was sold off.

There are no benefits in privatisation whatsoever for people who have to work for a living then have to pay exorbitant prices for services, that in most cases have declined, so that some crook can make a profit.

NSW Government railways are now called RailCorp to distinguish it from a public owned and operated service. (i.e. corporatised). Almost all of the workshops and rail, station and rolling stock maintenance has now been outsourced.

Some of the effects of privatisation listed below are obvious. Others are less obvious.

### **Loss of Jobs**

This is probably one of the most obvious effects of privatisation; rationalisation through staff reductions. Of course any private employer will not guarantee to keep the current workforce

and may bring their own staff. The aim is often just to change workers cultural practices in order to have a timid management-compliant workforce.

### **Lower Wage Rates**

Both in the lead-up to and after privatisation wages will be suppressed or reduced. Since the whole philosophy of the private owners is to maximise profits changing work practices and reducing wages is inevitable.

### **Erosion of Working Conditions**

It is acknowledged that public sector workers are the most highly unionised in the country. However union density in the national public sector fell from a density of around 67% in 1992 to 41% today (ABS), compared to the private sector where union density is just 13.8% and falling. Due to the loss of 120,000 public sector jobs

nationwide public sector union density fell from 46.3% (2009) to 41.5% (2010). In NSW union membership declined 63,700 overall and density fell from 21% in 2009 to 18.3% in 2010.

For a summary of ABS figures see (<http://smartwarringah.blogspot.com/2011/05/union-density-down-after-big-drop-in.html>)

It is also a fact that union members enjoy better working conditions and generally higher wage rate than non-union workers.

The attack on public union members from all sides has not just reduced the number of union members we have also seen a corresponding attack on workers rights.

The various industrial legislative moves over the years leading to the creation of Work Choices then to today's Fair Work Australia have not been conducive to extending workers rights. Instead they have entrenched a hostile continual erosion of workers rights and conditions. For instance, there are only 15 allowable conditions around which bargaining can take place or be included in an agreement. Also the only weapon available to workers, the right to strike, has been legally outlawed during the life of an agreement.

I believe though, that this legal curtailment should not stop workers from exercising both their moral and natural right to use industrial action as a mechanism to further their cause.

### **Loss of Union Rights**

Leigh Glover sums up below the problem for unions and workers before and after privatisation by describing the privatisation process in Victoria's transport industry.

"Privatisation meant that unions would be dealing, in most matters, directly with private corporations and would not be able to exert the same political power as when the system was public and their negotiations were with public authorities. However, before privatisation began, union power had been weakened by the scale of workforce reductions, after having been a major force in state politics for around a century." (Signs of Success or Signals of Failure? Symbolic Politics and Melbourne's Public Transport Privatisation 2010 - Leigh Glover)

### **Health and Safety**

Private operators are not as sensitive to Health and Safety concerns which effect workers as they perceive that taking shortcuts saves them money.

*See Page 20*

## **HIJACKING OF NSW GOVT. REFORM AGENDA**

Senior ranks of the public sector seem to have hijacked the O'Farrell Transport reform agenda already. We are being given almost daily updates of which hero has been transferred to which new management position to organise what new management functions should be transferred and where (read "who") they should be transferred to; it's all been about which jockey is wearing which vest this time and those noble souls who have now achieved recognition (posi-

tion, money, influence, privilege and so on) for their service; there has been no real mention of the beneficial change to be realised - we are just moving bodies around the agencies to achieve some sort of justified balance. So far, the faces remain the same. Experience and talent are obviously important but so are intentions and philosophy. That is, the new government has been telling us that front line jobs are safe so why are we continuing to use the same tired management mob.

Remember, too, that a lot of managers treat their areas of responsibility as personal little kingdoms. The way they act, demonstrates that they are either ignorant of or contemptuous of the policies and legislation that govern service delivery and people management within the industry. Now, if they are ignorant of these policies and laws they are obviously contemptuous of these policies and laws. That's terrible but true: these managers are deliberately ignoring the law of the land and getting away with it. How are they getting away with it? To a large extent, the RTBU Old Guard still has the upper hand within the RTBU and does not challenge management. Same old guard union officials, same old guard management and the thrust of any new government initiatives will be lost in a maze of committees, project teams, managers, consultants and similar. Shame. So much promise. Was it only promise or have they been hoodwinked already? And where is the RTBU in all of this? It is unfortunate but true that even after the recent elections, the RTBU Old Guard is still in control and the RTBU Old Guard is very comfortable conniving with public transport sector Old Guard management. The song remains the same. *Concerned Rail Corp Employee*

## **COMMENT ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT FAT CAT SALARIES**

Dear Sparks

I'm not sure how recent these figures (see below) are and some senior managers from RailCorp (and other agencies?) are not mentioned - for example, most of the Customer Service General Managers who would be on at least \$285,000 each. These people tend to be paid a performance bonus equivalent to ten to twenty per cent of their base pay as well.

Then there are all the people in middle management. These include 32 Customer Service Managers in RailCorp who are paid around \$130,000 per annum. That's \$4.16 million before performance bonuses. The performance of these people is of variable quality - some are good some are terrible; mediocre is a benchmark - none of them seems to have

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# RAIL – BUS NEWS

## N.S.W. STATE ELECTION

*By The Transport Scrutineer*

**As was expected the NSW Liberals won the election with a crushing landslide victory over a battered and worn out Keneally ALP Government. The people of NSW have spoken and right or wrong we as unionists now face a new government with an O'Farrell led Coalition in power.**

The new Transport Minister has retained the current CEO's and administration of Transport NSW and its agencies including the STA (State Transit Authority) and RailCorp. The next phase will be the total integration of these agencies much like the Public Transport Commission of the 1970's era. With this in mind one good point of this may well be the ability of employees to transfer from one agency to another without loss of service or seniority. Another less sobering thought is a return to the old PTC policies of cost cutting and rationalisation of services and functions and the ever present threat of privatisation which will inevitably lead to job losses and forced redundancies. Already even before the ink has dried on the signature of the new Transport Minister, the decision has been made to privatise Sydney Ferries Corp. Who will be next?

### RAILCORP

**The decision has been made to scrap the slow running train schedules and return to faster services for CityRail trains by at least next April. Extra services have been promised but if this was to occur then to operate the services properly we need an increase in Operations staff including properly staffed stations. Trains will also need adequate recovery time at terminals to avoid late running and cancellations.**

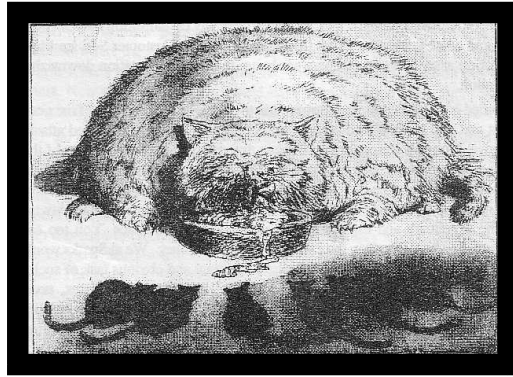
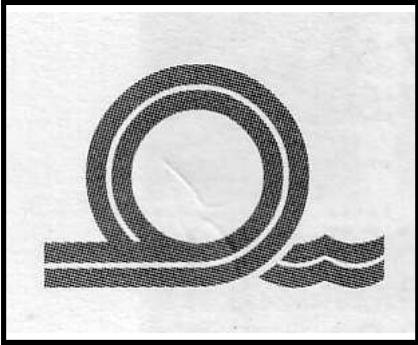
Another 99 H Set carriages (OSCARS) have been ordered with the view to eliminate V Sets on the Illawarra and also to increase capacity on Central Coast services. For this idea to work properly the ever reliable V Sets need to continue in service on Newcastle and Lithgow services. With the prospect of this happening and becoming reality one wonders if the Waratah Train Project will ever get past the testing stage.

Soon RailCorp EBA's will be due for renewal. What will happen? Will the Unions stand up for their members and go for realistic pay rises and workers' conditions? Or will they sell out again?

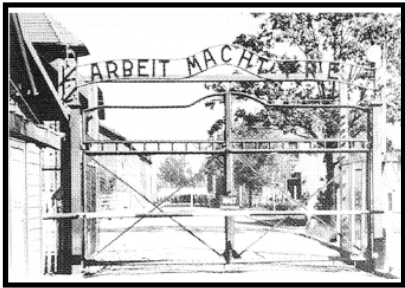
### State Transit

New uniforms and a brand new colour scheme for our buses are being implemented as we go to press, as is also the RTBU (Rail Tram & Bus Union) Bus Division's 2011 Log of Claims with 22 Points to be considered. Let us hope our new leadership is up to it, as the old regime was definitely not. Some of these claims are: Four Year Agreement; Increase standees from 15-20 over 4 years. Driver will have discretion

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## TRANSPORT N.S.W. FAT CAT JOB MARKET



*Entrance to the Transport NSW  
"Barracks" near the Inspectors'  
High Tech Command Post.*

As part of the official unveiling of Transport NSW, according to a quite achiever at Strawberry Hills, an "on line" job application system has been installed for the fat cats in their head quarters. The fat cats will all have to reapply for their jobs in the new entity. However, as part of the process, the Transport NSW CEO has introduced a catch. The fat cats will have to acquire "on the road experience" and be "housed" in a Transport NSW "Barracks" for 6 months as part of the "experience". Super vigilant Transport NSW Inspectors, fresh from a training program at Long Bay Gaol, will monitor the cubicles in the Barracks with radar guns, digital CCTV cameras and will

snap "home detention style bracelets" on the fat cats' ample paws, to ensure they remain confined inside, after shifts. No more creeping into the nearby Surry Hills "Touch of Class" Management Consultants after lapping up cream at expensive restaurants!

To experience the virtues of "franchising" the fat cats will be supplied with McDonalds Hamburgers. The "experience" will involve driving buses during peak hours on the busiest routes, 7 days a week. Additionally, they will have to wear



*The Transport NSW CEO as part of his  
"duty of care" provides "very secure"  
accommodation at the "Barracks".*



brand new Transport NSW “Guantanamo Bay” style orange rubber uniforms with tags for GPS monitoring of their movements.

Will drivers have to jump through similar hoops to secure a “career” in the new entity and be like dogs panting at the command of The Transport NSW CEO?

## S.T.A. BUSIE NEWS

### WAVERLEY DEPOT NEWS

#### **Sparks: What’s the latest with the STA bosses?**

Waverley Busie: The bosses are continuing with their bullying tactics as a softening up measure for more large scale attacks on us. Out of the blue, they have had inspectors playing with their new high tech toy “radar guns”, catching drivers doing varying speeds above the 10 KMPH speed limit zone for buses at interchanges and railway square. This is not much more than walking speed. Despite also being union members, the transport inspectors are executing the dirty job with glee! Treating us, as if we were an enemy! There is no enemy! If the bosses are stooping to these low down tactics, we shouldn’t make any fuss about passengers having the correct tickets when they catch our buses.

#### **Sparks: In what other ways are the bosses preparing the way for major attacks?**

WB: I was speaking to a mechanic the other day. He mentioned that as a result of the speedup and the bosses’ gutting of the social aspects of the job, the workplace has become empty and we have become listless. There is now a lot less camaraderie. No one wants to be together off the job, such as going to the pub. We are worn out from pressure on all sides. In particular there are no good running times due to traffic congestion.

#### **Sparks: How are you finding Transport NSW?**

WB: Since NSW Transport arrived with its official announcement on 19/4/11 there has been a multitude of changes. None of the bosses has the guts to tell us what’s really happening. At Waverley Depot there has been rumours that the bosses intend moving the old offices located upstairs to down stairs and moving the lockers and meal room upstairs. The Institute has lost responsibility for operating the canteen. It’s been effectively closed down with only a shell left and two fridges. The Depot OH&S (Occupational Health & Safety) Committee has been completely inactive in regard to these changes and rumoured changes. Otherwise the toilets which were only given attention when absolutely necessary are being properly fixed up. Ever more complaints have been received regarding the poor quality of the Transport NSW uniforms.

#### **Sparks: With the election of the O’Farrell Coalition Govt, what is your outlook regarding their agenda for the buses?**

WB: There have been rumours sweeping the STA that the Govt has sent representatives to Adelaide to approach such French companies as Trans Adelaide regarding the selloff of the buses. Whilst on an ABC Breakfast Radio program before the election, Jeff K e n n e t t



ex-Victorian Premier, who was behind the privatisation push in that State in the 1990's was interviewed. He boasted how he changed Victoria in the interests of private enterprise. 50,000 public servants were given the sack and had to reapply for their jobs and sign individual contracts. According someone from Victoria, I was speaking to recently, the operation of public transport in that state by private companies doesn't work. As the companies won't spend the money to ensure its smooth operation. They considered, the public transport system in NSW to be much healthier. One area high on the Liberal's likely agenda for franchising is the mechanical sections at depots, as it would be very easy to have private companies taking over this work. Associated with such a carve up of the STA, the bosses are intending to open a 24 hours motor and gear box overhaul at Port Botany Depot. As a result, the work forces at the mechanical sections at Waverley and other depots are likely to be reduced with these sections focusing just on the smaller jobs. It's very disruptive for the mechanics who would be rotated to work at Pt. Botany. One mechanic I know, as part of his trip to work would normally just catch a train from Wollongong to Bondi Junction. Now he would have to change trains and face a much longer trip to work on the days, he would be rostered at Pt. Botany. It's another case of horse trading people. Dignity has no price tag! Certainly this restructuring and centralising of large scale mechanical section work would fit into an STA and Govt. hidden agenda of franchising this operation to one company.

**Sparks: What are your thoughts on the multinational companies which are behind corporatisation?**

WB: There was an interesting program on Background Briefing on ABC Radio at 9.05 am to 10am Sunday Morning recently focusing on the Mining Tax. They focused on how some of these companies despite making huge profits pay no company tax. Such multinationals as Xstrata, Rio Tinto and BHP have relocated their head offices to tax havens such as Switzerland and the Bahamas. Xstrata has been quite notorious in this regard. It was kicked out of the

USA and told not to trade, but then relocated its corporate head quarters to Switzerland. However its mining operations are located in Zambia where it pays minimum tax, with the Zambian Govt mainly getting tax revenue from the mining operations workers. However, it has enormous political clout and can clamp down on Government talk of new taxes. It is cashed up multinational companies such as these which will take over STA operations and make millions in profits. While, we get zilch!

**Sparks: What are your ideas for fighting the Liberals attacks?**

WB: We need to learn from the uprisings in the Middle East, which were assisted by new internet computer communication technologies such as twitter, blogs, U tube and chat lines. The Wiki Leaks web site also was crucial to these developments. So alarmed by the effectiveness of this communication technology in spreading the spirit of revolt, governments of such countries as China are trying desperately to block it. We can use these mediums to expose the attacks of the Liberals and encourage workers and others to fight back. With the help of social media trainers we can develop the skills to create blogs which maintain our anonymity and so keep us off the bosses' radar screen.

**Sparks: What are your thoughts on the web of corruption involving the NSW Government, the ALP, the union hierarchy, the Police, the underworld and the State Transit?**

WB: Recently I met someone who left State Transit 12 years ago. He had been a driver on our job. He had quite an interesting and disturbing tale to tell. He told me how he was bashed up on the job by an underworld small fry. He tried to claim compo but was foiled by the collusion of the Carr Govt, the STA and the police with underworld figures. In particular, the Carr Govt introduced certain legislation which precluded his and others' compo entitlements and so saved the Govt. millions of dollars. As a result, he ended up losing a lot of his own money in pursuing the case in the court. To go to a higher court he would have had to spend \$200,000 of his own money. A web of collusion involving the STA and the union hierarchy also characterised the affair of the sacking of Chris Mansergh who had been elected several years back, as union rep at Port Botany Depot. Only a few noted journalists such as Dr Alfred McCoy who has written books about Drugs & Organised Crime and Asian Crime Gangs, John Pilger who focuses on exposing the seedy side of political parties and Bob Bottom, who writes on police corruption and organised crime in Australia, have had the courage to pursue serious research involving the media, government and crime world webs of corruption and conspiracy. It's a similar spiders web of collusion and intrigue which involves moves to privatise the STA and its carve up by multinational companies.

## **LEICHHARDT DEPOT NEWS**

**Sparks: What's happening with the bosses?**

Leichhardt Busie: We are continuing to face their harassment. They are now charging us \$100 for each broken mirror. However, one positive development recently was that a woman took the STA to the Industrial Relations Court over the issue and was successful in winning

her case. So avoiding the \$100 charge. Another positive development, is that the bosses have been forced to provide drivers with training for new routes.

**Sparks: How are the new articulated buses?**

LB: The bosses are trying to have them on more routes such as the 470, 443, 504 and 438, despite the fact that they won't fit into bus stops and create ever more problems with parking at the Quay.

**Sparks: What's your outlook for the new Liberal O'Farrell NSW Government?**

LB: He recently went through the Health Department Bureaucracy cutting out management jobs which he considered unnecessary and doing nothing. Will his next move be to take an axe to the State Transit/Transport NSW management bureaucracy?

**Sparks: How are the running times?**

LB: It seems with every pay rise, the bosses trim back our running times so where there was a layover break, there is now none or severely reduced. On paper the timetable is made to look nice, but in reality, constant late running causes us to work constant overtime. This late running also raises the question regarding why changeovers are required.

**Sparks: What was the outcome of the recent union elections?**

LB: Despite new union officials being elected into office, who were previously depot delegates, there has been no change in regard to our situation on the job. They appear to be like the previous officials, doing nothing to assist us in the fight against the bosses.

## **BURWOOD DEPOT NEWS**

We are still suffering from the enterprise agreements sold by the past elected officials. The shed drivers have the biggest problems with the shed restructure. Management has turned the heat up on the older shedies. This restructure is a way to cut staff and employ younger staff, who are more agreeable to management ways. This is a bad step. As it leads to a decline in safety standards.

Kingsgrove's gain is our loss with the return of our old staff manager. Let's hope it is temporary and with the new liberal government elected I hope a lot of the middle management is shifted out of the door.

The new Redfern officials seem to be trying to do the right thing about the EBA, but alas I think it will still be 3%pa +3% paid in Dec., back dated to July. Take it or leave it.

The new depot official is a big failure. There is a petition around to remove him. It has come to light since the election that the last elected official persuaded the opposing candidate to quit on the last day, before candidates can drop out of the elections. I reckon there should be a new election, after these facts have come to light.

## VICTORIAN RAILWAY NEWS

*In previous issues of SPARKS mention has been made of Human Resources trying to control V/Line over departmental heads. In this issue once again Drivers, Conductors, Station Staff and Staff from head office have combined to talk about the removal of a Manager at Spencer Street Station. As in previous issues, names have been changed.*

### **Sparks: What happened at Spencer Street?**

Clarence: A manager has been forced to resign on a trumped up sexual harassment charge.

Jethro: Yes one employee and another manager made a complaint over a joke the manager made.

Sheona: You see being in Head Office, we consider there was nothing wrong with the comments made by the manager but Human Resources wanted to terminate him.

### **Sparks: Why?**

Jethro: You see there was one manager too many at Spencer Street and due to the change of Government, there had to be budget cuts. You see during the Regional Fast Rail Freight Project, the Chief Manager at Spencer Street was seconded to Head Office to work on the project.

Clarence: Another manager from another District was seconded to the Chief's position at Spencer Street.

Sheona: To replace the seconded manager in the other district, a new manager was appointed from outside.

Clarence: When the Regional Fast Rail Project was completed, the seconded manager was returned to his position at Spencer Street. You see Human Resources stuffed up. There was one manager surplus.

### **Sparks: What did they do?**

Jethro: They created a new position at Spencer Street.

Clarence: Yes a new position was created to accommodate the manager who was seconded. Instead of two tiers of management, there was three.

Sheona: You see why this manager had to be terminated. It was to cut costs. They held an enquiry over the complaints, but this was a sham. The manager had to go.

Jethro: This manager was a friend of the workers. He would help you if you needed help and he helped many an employee on towards a career path.

Rastas & Roscoe: At this point may we join the discussion. We have just had a management change over at the Drivers Depot. Our esteemed Crew Manager Dr Dolittle is being shunted sideways to the training area and the senior driver trainer is going to be our new boss. You see management is frightened if a particular Driver is elected as our union Union Secretary. This driver has promised to stand up to Human Resources if elected.



Sheona: You see Human Resources are frightened of the drivers. They want to smash them, but the drivers fight. What makes myself sick is the Drivers' Manager survives yet the Manager at Spencer Street was sacked. You see the remark was a joke.

Clarence: The manager was honest and to Human Resources the remark he said was only a joke.

Sheona: Human Resources are not interested in honesty only professionalism. In other words you can lie at an enquiry and get away with it. Honesty has gone out the door. They claim the manger was not professional.

Clarence: In other words Human Resources has broken one of V/Line's principles to suit themselves.

**Sparks: Can you tell us about the persons who complained?**

Jethro: One of the complainants is the Catering Manager and he is on stress leave. You see he will not return until this manager is removed. He and the manager who was removed have not see eye to eye for the past five years. Since he has been on stress leave, the catering department has run successfully.

**Sparks: Is this person pulling a rort?**

Rastus: Maybe so why don't they get rid of him and put the sacked manager in his job? I say the department would run better. I have been told the complaint was trivial yet Human Resources blew it up.

**Sparks: What about the other person who complained?**

Jethro: This person works at Spencer Street and the manager's remark was said as a joke and this person could not take the joke and complained.

Rastus: You can say that but you see we drivers hate this person who complained. You see this person is a Bully. This person treats passengers on trains as if they are rubbish.

Roscoe: Yes this is correct. I was on a train travelling to work in uniform and this person demanded I show my employee's pass. The rule book says an employee in uniform does not have to their pass.

Rastus: This person has also stated to another driver that if this person observes a person in the cab of the Railmotor as well as the driver, they will be put into Human Resources.

**Sparks: What type of a person is this cretin?**

Clarence: This person also treats station staff like dirt. One day one of the female platform staff because the weather was cold let the passengers on the train. This person turned up late and turfed all the passengers off the train, saying it was not prepared. Then this person started to bully the platform supervisor reducing her to tears.

Rastus: The driver of the train was disgusted at the way the supervisor was treated and told the other drivers.

**Sparks: Why is this person still on the job?**

Clarence: Well you see management is using this person for their own use and what this person does not realise was once this manager was fired then they will be fired.

Rastus & Roscoe: Well this idiot does not realise what trouble they have caused.

Jethro: Once it was clear the manager was going to be fired a group of workers gathered up a petition to save the manager's job.

Rastus and Roscoe: Yes the drivers signed the petition as well as other staff.

Jethro: One of the workers presented the petition to some of the salaried staff to sign as one said they would not sign the petition as he was a supervisor, yet the sacked manager had helped this person obtain a position.

Clarence: Whilst the petition was being collected a notice appeared on the sign on area at Spencer Street, saying the manager resigned.

**Sparks: This is very sad. It appears the manager was popular with all employees. There could have been a mediation session between the manager and the complainants and a compromise could have been worked out.**

Rastus & Roscoe: Once again in having the final say, the sacked manager has been treated very shabbily. As for the two persons who complained these cretins should get out of the industry. As for the persons who would not sign the petition, they are gutless. This was an issue to fight for. As for professionalism versus honesty. Honesty comes out superior.

As we said in previous issues of SPARKS, DON'T FRONT HUMAN RESOURCES.

## MARITIME TRANSPORT NEWS

### **Supervisor steals a break**

On one shift in early April, an overbearing supervisor at DP World Botany forced wharfies to work for five and a half hours straight.

One gang was forced to continue lashing a ship and then operate machinery for 45 minutes during what should have been their break time.

For an eight hour shift, the DP World Agreement entitles wharfies to one or two breaks totaling 45 minutes. But any break has to start no later than 3 hours and 45 minutes into the shift.

We have the right to take our meal breaks at the scheduled times. This must not be allowed to happen again.

### **Qube Logistics buys DP World's share of POTA**

Qube Logistics announced on April 18 that it will pay \$106 million for majority ownership and control of P&O Trans Australia (POTA).

After first buying into POTA in April 2007, Qube will now own 94.5 percent of the road and rail container transport company. Qube is owned by Sam Kaplan and controversial former Patrick boss Chris Corrigan.

Qube's buyout of DP World's stake in POTA follows last year's \$1.5 billion sale of a 75 percent share of DP World Australia to US bank CitiGroup.

### **Did he really say that?**

At the MUA yard meeting held at DP World Botany on March 30, members heard report backs on the upcoming Enterprise Agreement.

During the discussion around permanency, Sydney Branch Secretary Paul McAleer suggested that members should realise that all of us cannot be on a fixed roster with a fixed salary.

Really? This statement not only goes against what has occurred on the waterfront in the past, it also contradicts the Maritime Industry Program of the Communist Party of Australia (of which McAleer is a member). The Program states that "the utmost effort must be placed on the reduction and eventual abolition of total casual employment" and the need to struggle for "casual labour to be reduced to 20% of permanent labour as a first step in this process".

It appears that McAleer has either forgotten these words of his Party's program, or he doesn't agree with them. Either way, comments like these will only hamstring the fight for permanent rostered jobs for all.

### **Strike action at Patrick bulk & general ports**

Frustrated after six months of failed enterprise bargaining negotiations, MUA members at four Patrick bulk & general (B&G) ports took protected strike action in December 2010 and January 2011.





Wharfies at the Patrick sites are demanding 10% a year pay rises, more permanent jobs, career progression, and a better OH&S approach.

Patrick has shown a lack of good faith during negotiations. Its first pay offer was a paltry 2.6% a year. The fact that the key Patrick negotiator is former MUA official Mick O'Leary is certainly not helping matters.

Wharfies in Albany, Fremantle, Melbourne and Geelong have voted to strike. The ballots for protected action required under Fair Work laws have seen votes from 94% to 100% in favour of action. Voting is currently underway in Darwin.

Albany struck for 48 hours on December 30 and for six days from January 29. Fremantle went out for 72 hours on December 27 and five days from January 29. Melbourne's Webb Dock

saw a 72 hour strike begin on January 12 and three stoppages from February 4 to 7. Geelong struck for 24 hours on January 10.

The Patrick B&G campaign is vital because its outcome will flow on to the container terminals. The Patrick terminal agreement has expired and the MUA has lodged an application for a vote for protected action. The DP World agreement expires on June 30.

If Patrick management don't cave in soon, an all-out, indefinite strike across all Patrick B&G sites might make them see sense. If not, coastwide strike action that involves all Patrick then DP World container terminals will.

*(From "Vigilance" No.50 Feb. 2011 & No.51 April 2011) "Vigilance" is a socialist bulletin for MUA members in Sydney produced by Shane Bentley - the "Port Botany Wharfie" See [www.vigilanceBulletin.org](http://www.vigilanceBulletin.org))*

*Continued From Page 6* done anything to improve the lot of the travelling the public; they spend most of their time harassing employees. Customer Service Managers?

Then there are 32 Safety Co-ordinators. They are on \$100,000 each for getting out of bed. Most of them have no qualifications and just as much experience. That's another \$3.2 million (they don't get performance bonuses as far as I know). Again, performance is patchy to mediocre. *Rebel RailCorp Employee*

Elizabeth Zealand Public Transport Ticketing Corporation Chief Executive Officer \$300,800.00

Rob Mason RailCorp Chief Executive Officer \$503,181.00

Andrew Byford RailCorp Chief Operating Officer \$408,544.00

Gavin Campbell RailCorp Group General Manager, Asset Operations \$375,000.00

Ian McCulloch RailCorp Group General Manager, Engineering and Projects \$375,000.00

Frederick Paton RailCorp Project Director PPP \$334,400.00

Paul Poynton RailCorp Strategic Business Relationship Manager \$333,333.00

Clare Kitcher RailCorp Group General Manager Safety and Environment and Chief Risk Officer \$318,552.00

Gary Pedersen RailCorp Group General Manager, Finance and Corporate Services \$316,763.00

Louise Hart Rail Corp Director Special Projects \$303,410.00

Joseph Camilleri RailCorp General Manager Rolling Stock \$289,008.00

Brian Hartmann RailCorp Director Human Resources \$288,919.00

Vivienne King RailCorp Group General Manager Strategy and Service Development \$285,000.00

Aidan Hughes RailCorp Executive General Manager Commercial Services \$278,512.00

John Minchin RailCorp General Manager Infrastructure Maintenance \$277,695.00

David Foldi RailCorp General Manager, Infrastructure Renewals \$274,386.00  
Nigel Howlett RailCorp General Manager Projects \$271,253.00  
Ian Hill RailCorp General Manager Train Crewing \$266,556.00  
Guy Collishaw RailCorp Engineering Technical Director \$265,598.00  
Dimitrios Modrouvanos RailCorp General Manager Chief Engineer \$262,840.00  
Marianne Hammerton RailCorp Director Office of Rail Heritage \$262,637.00  
Irene Rusak RailCorp Corporate Counsel, Company Secretary \$262,244.00  
Armand Casolin RailCorp Chief Health Officer \$262,218.00  
David Spiteri RailCorp General Manager, Asset Planning and Performance \$261,641.00  
Thomas Forrest RailCorp Executive General Manager Business Coordination \$260,000.00  
Anthony Eid RailCorp General Manager, Operations and Deputy Chief Operating Officer  
\$258,960.00  
Ronnie Azzi RailCorp General Manager Professional Services \$258,950.00  
Peter Crim p RailCorp General Manager Finance \$254,678.00  
Robert Needham RailCorp Transition and Implementation Director \$251,606.00  
Julian Richards RailCorp General Manager, Communications and Control Systems  
\$249,600.00  
Ronald Creighton RailCorp General Manager, Emergency Preparedness \$249,116.00  
William Cowan RailCorp General Manager, Customer Service, Sector \$248,170.00  
Kevin McCafferty RailCorp General Manager, Strategic Procurement and Supply  
\$241,041.00  
Stephen Smith RailCorp General Manager, ICT Strategy and Architecture \$240,000.00  
Steven Beasley RailCorp General Manager, Business Services \$236,106.00  
Peter Rowley State Transit Authority Chief Executive \$337,840.00  
Paul Dunn State Transit Authority General Manager, Finance and Administration  
\$249,381.00

*Continued From Page 7* with duty of care; Minimum 8 hours worked for each shift; 0.5% income protection based on individual rosters; All converted shifts minimum 8 hours; 10 minutes pre-departure ex-shed (all circumstances); Paid ADO on day; The ability to a block of five ADO's as an extra leave option; Loading time at major termini; Passenger complaints against bus operators to be addressed only if submitted in writing and signed by the complainant (no phone complaints); Minimum 11 hour spread on broken; Ability to use home and duty pass on private buses; One dollar per hour pay increase every year over life of agreement. Meanwhile, traffic gets worse, buses are running later than ever due to gridlock in the Sydney CBD during AM and PM peaks and on Weekends and the schedulers are doing NOTHING!!! Says a lot for their incompetence, doesn't it? No wonder we have such a large turnover of Bus Operators.

## INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS' NEWS

### **Egypt: Public Transport Workers Establish Independent Union |**

*by Khawaga*

Cairo, March 24 2011: Egypt's newest trade union was established on Thursday; the Independent Union of Public Transport Authority Workers. Hundreds of PTA workers attended the inauguration and preparatory conference of their independent trade union - at the Journalists' Syndicate.

Joining this union are 60,000 bus-drivers, conductors, mechanics, and engineers employed in the PTA - from across greater Cairo. Tens of thousands have rallied for the establishment of representative, accountable and democratically-elected trade union committees. Workers voted to break away from the General Union of Land Transport Workers, a yellow union within the (state-controlled) Egyptian Trade Union Federation. This new union is the fifth independent association to be established since 1957. Over the course of the past two years five independent unions came into being: The Real Estate Tax Authority Employees' Union, The Independent Teachers' Syndicate, Egyptian Health Technologists' Syndicate, Pensioners' Federation; And today the Independent Union of the Public Transport Authority Workers. The Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions (EFITU) - a confederation of the first four associations - was established on January 30th, 2011. *Thanks to Libcom*

*Continued From Page 5* Government departments are most likely to be self insurers and closely monitor health and safety in order not to lose this status.

They are also more sensitive, as public servants, to legislative requirements due to bureaucratic brinkmanship played out within public sector workplaces.

Private operators are unlikely to give time for health and safety committee's or provide protective equipment to workers on the job. In most cases there are enough holes in health and safety legislation such as the WorkCover Act for private operators to crawl through.

The NSW Liberal Government is attempting to put the onus on workers to prove that their employer was negligent in an attempt to reduce Workers Compensation payouts and therefore insurance premiums. Workers would not be able to afford the litigation needed to pursue claims in an industrial court. Basically, at present employers are responsible for workers from the time they step out the front door until they return home. Any changes to this policy would severely disadvantage injured workers.

### **Service Price Rises**

In NSW when the Government Insurance Office (GIO) was privatised and the insurance industry deregulated insurance premiums went to double or triple of what they were within a year or two.

In Victoria TAFE fees have tripled ahead of part privatisation and competition with private education providers. This has driven many students from lower socio-economic backgrounds out of tertiary education.

When electricity was partly privatised in NSW there was a clause that was included in the handover documents that ensures that price rises be set by the power providers rather than a government regulatory commission such as IPART.

We only have to look at the exorbitant fees charged to exit on Sydney's Airport Line or the Monorail to see what private operators would do if they got hold of public transport.

### **Poorer Services**

It is anticipated that if Sydney Ferries are franchised or privatised that many of the existing routes, which have poor patronage, will be axed in favour of more profitable routes. The routes will be decided by the propensity for profit rather than the need of local or isolated communities.

One other aspect of privatisation that leads to poorer services in the long run is that there is no incentive to maintain or upgrade existing infrastructure. Private maintenance companies on contract have a vested interest (i.e. profit motive) in not upgrading lines, bridges or existing government infrastructure. It costs them money.

Private bus companies in Sydney's outer western suburbs, for example, are a far cry from the air conditioned government buses which service the inner suburbs and city.

The Age newspaper reporting on Victoria's public transport after privatisation in March 2010 says:

"Victoria's infrastructure is 'barely adequate' and does not meet the demands of a growing state, with rail, electricity and water the worst performers, a report card by Engineers Australia has found."

"Rail infrastructure fared the worst - with a D rating - despite the state government's \$38 billion transport plan."

The continuing loss of a social wage (protective and essential services and benefits for workers provided by taxes and the state) is also a symptom of the stepped up attack on workers.

From O' Farrell blaming of public sector worker wage rises for the massive deficit in NSW, to Gillard's scapegoating of single mums, the handicapped, the unemployed etc. for the lack of a "balanced budget" federally, it is all a great public lie. It is a distraction from the real and extravagant excesses of the corporate sector and politicians who conspire to sell this lie and create havoc and hardship for ordinary working people.

### **Taxpayer Subsidies**

The NSW budget 2010-2011 allocated \$3.3 billion to rail including \$1.6 billion toward operating costs of passenger services and \$1.3 billion for capital investment.

\$1.1 billion was allocated for government bus services.

By comparison the smaller Victorian rail system which was privatised in 1999 has seen taxpayer subsidies averaging \$1 billion a year since it was hived off to the private operators. (source The Age January 22, 2011) Before privatisation the Victorian Government's costs for rail and transport was around \$700million. Since privatisation the Victorian transport system has declined markedly.

The privatisation in Victoria promised:

To secure a progressive improvement in the quality of services.

To secure a substantial and sustained increase in the number of passengers.

To minimise the long-term costs of public transport to the taxpayer.

To transfer risk to the private sector.

To ensure that the highest standards of safety were maintained

This turned out to be a massive lie and the public have been worse off ever since, the decline in services leading to passenger reductions, massive staff reductions, increased costs to taxpayers, all risk carried by the people of Victoria and an increase in accidents due to poor infrastructure and cost cutting.

### **Corruption**

While I regard the system that we all live under as a corrupt cancer on all working people, corruption is much more likely in the lead up to and following privatisation. Just look at the manoeuvring of the Keneally Labor Government in the lead up to the electricity privatisation. On the night the electricity privatisation bill was agreed to several directors of the public electricity companies were sacked or stood down and replaced with yes men who supported the privatisation. There was complete disregard for public opinion or other members of the Labor Party.

Often the buyers of public services are contributors to the major political parties and know how and who to call for favours when needed. Ex-party stooges, most with shady pasts, such as Graham Richardson are used as go-betweens to get the best deals for their private clients. Bob Carr's stint at Macquarie Bank, for which he is paid handsomely, gives Macquarie Bank an insiders run on lucrative deals between them and the government.

In dealing with contractors and sub-contractors several RailCorp procurement managers were able to be enrich themselves at the expense of NSW taxpayers by taking bribes and awarding dubious contracts. While they may have been caught and ended up at ICAC very few have been charged or received sentences despite the \$ millions involved.

Just in NSW there are an endless list of crook deals involving the government and the private sector that have been investigated - so far no elected officials have been held to account. The links between Lend Lease and the Barangaroo Development Authority, the Orange Grove affair, the Wollongong development, the Baulderstone ports contract, transfer of public housing stock to the private sector along with dubious maintenance contracts .....(ad infinitum) are all recent examples of conduct that could be classed a corrupt.

### **Democracy and the Right to Know**

When governments privatise services, agreements between the government and the private sector are classed as “commercial in confidence”. This means that many parts of the agreement will remain secret and will not be available to the general public even under Freedom of Information legislation. As NSW residents, and theoretically public owners of state infrastructure and services, we have a right to know about the deals which involve us and our common property. We have the right to ask, “what do they have to hide?” by shielding behind “the commercial in confidence” clauses.

### **Privatised Services Sold at Bargain Basement Prices**

It's usually the most profitable state owned enterprises that are sold off first. The TAB, the State Lotteries Office, Freight Rail, Electricity and many other state services which raised significant amounts of revenue for the State and employed large numbers of people were all sold off. In all cases they raised \$100's millions to fund state departments such as education and health. The question is why?

These sales were criticised by auditors, the media and the general public who believed that they had all been sold far below their realisable value. Why?

In the case of FreightCorp, which was making a profit at the time of sale, the public and union members were told the lie that there was no future for rail freight in NSW. It now turns out that is expected that goods tonnage carried by rail is expected to triple from the sell-off date into the next decade. Despite this being a private enterprise governments are now pumping billions into freight infrastructure and new freight lines.

Such is the nature of privatisation. The private operators take the profits while we the people of NSW provide the means.

### **Climate Change**

“Private electricity retailers would have a financial imperative to increase demand for electricity, thereby increasing our state's greenhouse pollution. This is the exact opposite of what needs to happen.” Perry Brown @ Rising Tide

We have less control over the production, distribution, health and safety of government utilities if they are in private hands. Innovation, regard for reducing green house gases and increasing patronage of public transport services etc. are not going to be priorities for private owners. Privatisation is a disaster for the environment and for humanity.

### **Privatisation is Theft**

The commonwealth has never existed and employers and their servant politicians are at war with workers over the spoils and wealth which workers produce with their own hands and ingenuity. At the moment they have the upper hand. We have no choice but to regain our fair share by fighting back. Privatisation is the theft of what belongs to all of us to enrich the few who believe that they have some god given right. They do not. Like the people of Egypt, we require bold moves to put things back in our favour.

In the next edition of Sparks I will raise some of the ways we can do that!

## 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