

around the tracks



RAIL, TRAM AND BUS UNION • LOCOMOTIVE DIVISION, NSW BRANCH • ISSUE 9 • NOVEMBER 2006

Divisional Secretary

As the result of feedback and surveys of members, recent Divisional Conferences and decisions of Divisional Council, the Locomotive leadership team has developed a two year strategic plan for the Division. The plan addresses major changes that our Division and members have been undergoing. There had been a prolonged public attack on drivers and railworkers in general by sections of the media, and increased employer and government hostility as the rail industry became a focal point of electoral politics. This time also coincided with the introduction of the Federal Government's anti-worker, and anti-union Workchoices legislation. These were potentially troubling times, but rather than hide away and hope these problems may pass, we have used that time to continue to build a strong and resilient union.

We have and will continue to face these challenges and threats head on in our efforts to protect and extend members working conditions and job security. As a union we have remained solid in the face of these challenges, and we have been able to

not only hold ground but to win significant gains for members at a time when many unions are struggling to survive. We have been acutely aware of the simple fact that to be able to effectively repel attacks on our members we need to be continuously building on the strengths of our union. That is, as a union we need to be continuously looking for ways to improve, to become stronger and better at what we do. We have adopted the slogan *A Proud History – A Strong Future* to guide this ongoing building project.

A part of this process has been to critically review the way our union conducts its daily work, its strengths and areas for improvement. We have examined our internal structures and resources and identified a number of key changes that will strengthen and unify our union. The Division has



ALEX CLAASSENS
Divisional Secretary

put in place a number of substantial changes over the past few years, with a major Divisional restructure as its centrepiece. The foundations for this restructure were put in place with a range of administrative changes flowing from the 2003 Divisional Conference. In 2005 the Locomotive Divisional Conference identified and developed practical changes at the workplace and Divisional levels that would take the union forward. These involve establishing Depot Organising Committees as the organising model for increasing participation

and union activity in each workplace. The Locomotive Division Plan for 2005-2007 identifies key supports and resources that need to be put in place to consolidate and secure these changes. The last Divisional Council requested that detailed information on the Locomotive Plan be sent out to all members. The Divisional Plan and main restructuring efforts are summarised in this *Around the Tracks*.

I would like to thank the leadership team and the many activists for their efforts in developing and implementing these changes.

We look forward to, and are actively building, a strong future for our members. An active and united union at the workplace and all other levels is the best guarantee that we remain defiant in the face of threat, and continue to improve the working lives of all members.

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NSW RTBU Locomotive Division Plans For 2005-2007

BACKGROUND

The plans contained within this paper are the result of the following needs:

- A strategic and transparent approach to our activities to meet the expectations of our members.
- To be in alignment with the larger Branch, National and wider union movement goals and objectives.
- Meet the goals set for us by the Locomotive Division's conference of August 2005.
- Counter and/or manage the threats identified to our success
- Address the weaknesses identified that prevent our building of union power.

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The main objectives for the Locomotive Division Plan are set in the context of adjustment and restructuring of the RTBU at national and state levels.

NATIONAL

At the national level our union has been streamlining a number of key functions to address major changes in the industry. De-regulation of our industry, the emergence of a range of operators, and attempts to play one section of our membership against others to weaken conditions, has required the union to clearly re-define the allocations of roles at national, state and divisional levels.

These changes have resulted in more effective and efficient approaches to enterprise bargaining, union campaigns and policy development.

NSW BRANCH SITUATION

Similarly, over the past few years, the NSW Branch has moved substantially towards an activist-based organising model. This has been achieved through a

strategic and concerted effort to train activists across all areas of our membership, and to provide resources and support for these networks.

The Branch has conducted a series of effective campaigns in response to industry changes and potential threats to our members.

Safety and OHS issues continue to be central to our workplace and Branch organising focus, with the union implementing a series of initiatives to improve workplace safety for members.

The emphasis of all the changes within the national union place responsible and informed activism at the centre of our activity.

This requires delegates and activists to take responsibility for implementing the union strategies, and to be accountable to members in everything they do.

NSW LOCOMOTIVE DIVISION

- Locomotive Division (Loco) reflects the changes across the industry, its members are almost evenly distributed between both the private and public sectors.
- Loco currently organises members across 15 organisations. There is much consolidation/change going on in the industry, further complicating the conditions of employment for many members, eg Pacific National has purchased Freight Australia and ATN, QR National Expansion through the purchase of Interail, CRT and ARG, Southern Shorthaul Railroad divestment of much of its assets to Patricks, Purchase of Silverton by the South Spur Group.

OUR GOAL

DURING 2005-2007 THE LOCOMOTIVE DIVISION WILL BUILD INCREASED WORKPLACE POWER AND PARTICIPATION, CAPABLE OF THRIVING IN THE NEW IR ENVIRONMENT AND DELIVERING IMPROVED WAGES AND CONDITIONS TO TRAIN DRIVERS IN NSW



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The Need For Continuous Improvement

THE NSW LOCOMOTIVE DIVISION HAS BEEN UNDERGOING MAJOR RESTRUCTURING IN THE PAST FEW YEARS TO:

- Improve the internal union networks and communications
- Provide more relevant and effective representation on union decision-making bodies
- Assist in the development of greater workplace autonomy and responsibility for union representatives and workplace activists
- Strengthen and improve ways of protecting RTBU members interests.

The current efforts to restructure the Locomotive Division to be able to more effectively meet changes in our industry that reflect the changing requirements and interests of members was initiated at the Locomotive Divisional Conference in 2003. At that time delegates from across the Division identified a number of key areas requiring change. These were translated into 14 major recommendations proposed by the delegates. The recommendations mainly addressed a range of administrative changes within the operations of the Locomotive Division (highlighting areas such as communications, and representation on Divisional Council that better reflected the changed work landscape).

At the Locomotive Divisional Conference held in August 2005, key delegates

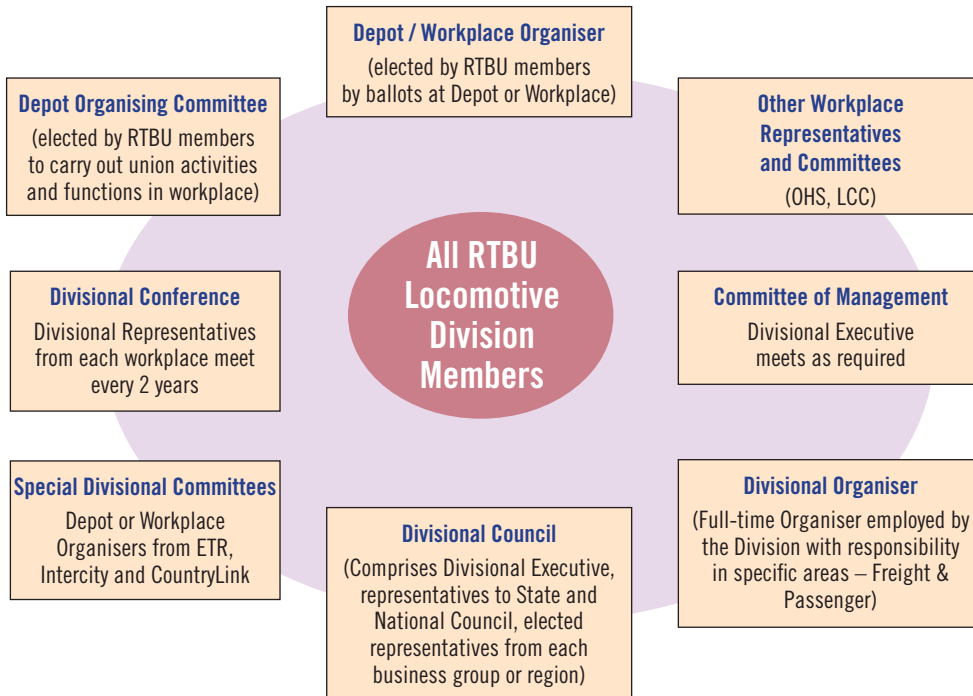
reviewed the changes to date, and identified the need to extend the restructuring to the local depot and workplace level and measures to build on the organising foundations that had been laid. It was agreed by all key delegates at the Conference that another layer of improvement was essential to ensure that the union was strong, effective and well resourced at the local level. This 'second wave' of change within our Division primarily identified the need to overhaul the sub-division structures and replace them with more inclusive activist development and co-ordination at depots and workplaces across the Division. This focus was seen as crucial in strengthening the union at the local level and building and maintaining effective mechanisms that could better deal with a range of issues and potential threats to our members. These include improved communications and reporting, revised processes for election of representatives to Divisional Council, and a range of other 'administrative' reforms to improve the operations of the Division. These provide a foundation and framework for the improved local organising measures now being implemented.

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NSW BRANCH LOCOMOTIVE DIVISION STRUCTURE



SUMMARY OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE LOCOMOTIVE DIVISION

Divisional Council
– Divisional decision-making and policy making body. Consisting of Divisional President, Divisional Senior Vice President, Divisional Junior Vice president, Divisional Secretary, Divisional Assistant Secretary, and representatives elected from regional and business groups (currently 27). Divisional Council includes elected representatives to National and Branch Councils.

Divisional Councillor
– elected union representative to Divisional Council from each business group or regional area. A Divisional Councillor can also hold positions within their depot, with the exception of the Depot Organiser position.

Divisional Conference
– comprises representatives from the Divisional policy-making bodies and representatives of all workplaces within the Division. Meets every 2 years to review progress and initiatives within the Division.

Committee of Management – Comprises the Divisional Executive; Divisional Secretary, Divisional President, Divisional Assistant Secretary, Divisional Senior Vice President and Divisional Junior Vice President. Meets as required between Divisional Councils to administer Divisional policies and procedures.

Special Divisional Committees – The Locomotive Divisional Council has authorised the establishment of specific committees to address union issues relevant to particular business groups or regional areas. These include the Electric

Train Drivers Committee, Intercity Train Drivers Committee, CountryLink Train Drivers Committee, and company specific committees.

Sub-Divisions: Within the Divisional rules there is provision for each depot to establish its own sub-divisional committee. Within the Locomotive Division these are the Depot Organising Committees.

Depot Organising Committees – Where depots have 20 or more financial RTBU members, the Depot Organising Committee is the union representative and organising structure within the depot. Will generally consist of a Depot Organiser, Depot Convenor, Membership Officer and members

Divisional Organisers
– Divisional Organisers are employed by the Locomotive Division to oversee and facilitate union activities in particular areas of responsibility (eg. Freight and Passenger). They do not hold elected positions within the Division.

Depot Organiser – Union representative elected from membership (through the Australian Electoral Commission every 2 years) within each depot with primary responsibility for union organising and representing the Division within the depot.

Workplace Organiser
– Where the depot has less than 20 financial RTBU members the primary responsibility for union representation and organising will be the Workplace Organiser, elected internally from members at the depot.

Depot and Workplace Organising Committees

DEPOT ORGANISING COMMITTEES

The primary responsibility for union organising activities rests with the Depot Organising Committees, and the accountability and shared roles of each member of the Committee.

- The Depot Organising Committees represent the Divisional Sub-Divisions in the workplace, and will consist of members comprising the Depot or Workplace Organiser, Organising Committee Convenor and the Committee Membership Co-ordinator, and other positions that will be determined by members at particular work locations.
- The Depot Organising Committee is the local union leadership, and is responsible for ensuring that the conduct of the Depot Organising Committee is directed to building R.T.B.U membership and loyalty, and for developing the delegates and activists within the depot or workplace.
- In Depots with 20 or more financial RTBU members, the position of Depot Organiser will be elected (through the Australian Electoral Commission) by members every two years
- **The DOC is formed after the declaration of the election of the Depot Organiser or Workplace Organiser, who then convenes a meeting of members within the sub-division.**
- **Positions on the DOC are created in accordance with the above definitions as determined by members.**
- **Identified positions on the Depot Organising Committee will be elected internally by a ballot of**

union members at the Depot

- **In Depots with less than 20 financial RTBU members, a Workplace Organiser will be elected internally by members**
- The Depot Organising Committee represents the RTBU in a united and disciplined manner
- Roles within the Depot Organising Committee will be activity / task based, allocated on the basis of identifying activists with particular passions, skills or interests.
- Once tasks and responsibilities have been allocated, the person allocated the task has full responsibility for carrying out this role, and is accountable to the DOC in properly performing the required duties.
- To ensure that OH&S issues are of high priority in the Depot of workplace, OHS committees or representatives should report to the DOC.
- Where there is no OHS representative in the workplace or depot, the DOC should create this position within the DOC
- The primary roles of the Depot Organising Committee in each area is to organise and represent the interests of all Locomotive Division members in the depot or workplace.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Build union membership and activity within the depot or workplace.
- Identify priorities and strategies to strengthen union activism in depot/ workplace
- Communicate with delegates / other workplace representatives on a regular basis
- Communicate with membership in the depot or workplace continuously
- Represent members to management

- Communicate on a regular basis with the Divisional Council delegate on a regular basis
- Communicate with the union office on a regular basis
- Report major issues, grievances or initiatives in depot or workplace to union office on regular basis
- Ensure copies of all correspondence between Depot Organising Committee and local managers is forwarded, and that copies of resolutions for Head Office action are promptly forwarded to Head Office
- Maintain all Depot Organising Committee records and ensure that they are properly handed over to any successor to the position
- Assume full responsibility for the delegation of such tasks and responsibilities that may be so delegated, with the aim of sharing power and developing others
- Ensure communications with Divisional Council Delegate, and/or (E.T.D.C, I.C.D.C and CDC delegate where relevant) and with the union office are regularly made and that reports are given on communications to the Depot Organising Committee
- Assist in the establishment and maintenance of delegate/ activists networks within the Depot Organising Committee
- Assist Depot and Workplace organisers to implement local organising and membership representation responsibilities
- Keep records of all Division members/ depot organising committee members in relevant area
- Communicate with Depot Organising Committee members on a regular basis
- Identify issues that are widely felt and deeply held in relevant Depot or Workplace
- Identify issues that may affect Locomotive Division members in another workplace
- Facilitate succession planning
- Identify training needs of Division members in local area.

in brief

GUIDELINES FOR MEMBERS BEING INTERVIEWED BY RAILCORP MANAGEMENT

A pamphlet providing guidelines and information for members being formally interviewed by management following an incident, accident or other situation leading to an investigation, has been developed by the Locomotive Division. Two documents have been produced: A Guide for Members being Interviewed, and a Guide for Union Representatives Acting as Support Persons during an interview.

The Guidelines have been distributed to RailCorp members. Copies are also available on our website: www.rtbu-locomotive.asn.au or by contacting the union office.

LOCOMOTIVE HISTORY RESEARCH

The Locomotive Division has commissioned preliminary research for a project to document the history of work on the footplate. The initial research will be seeking documents, photographs and other artefacts that reflect the social, industrial and economic history of train drivers and their union over the past century.

If members have information or material (work documents, AFULE records, social clubs, journals or newsletters, photos, anecdotes) that they think might be useful to this project, please contact Donna at the union office on (02) 9264 3400 or Steve Wright at the Newcastle Office on (02) 4969 4665

Our Goal

During 2005-2007 the Locomotive Division will build increased Workplace Power and Participation, Capable of Thriving in the New IR Environment and Delivering Improved Wages and Conditions to Train Drivers in NSW

Objectives	Tasks	Objectives	Tasks
Improved Depot Organising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift from apathy to activity • Shift from insurance mindset to issues based unionism • Local tactical planning • Organising where none previously 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review sub-divisional structures • Restructure Sub Divisions as per Depot Organiser model • Develop and introduce Job Descriptions for all organising positions and remove barriers to participation • Develop training course for Key delegates who will then travel to each work location and train activists in new structure • Role of DC and BCers and Head Office as a resource centre for active delegates • Create new membership kit that explains new structures • Create Delegate kits that will give them the tools to carry out their tasks • Education and development plan to be developed • Depot Maps • Identify activists/leaders • Succession planning • Recruiting new members • Mentoring new members • Depot tours by organisers • Delegate Database 	Membership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs to be continually monitored and updated • Database needs to be organiser friendly • Monthly report to be created and distributed as required to D/Cs and Delegates • Depots to maintain membership roll in workplace and report movements through structure to H/O 	Tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication should be activity promoting Vs Information dissemination • Review types of bulletins and distribution needs • Structured Organiser to Delegate contact • Delegate contacts members on a 1:1 basis • Use of SMS, H/O to industry groups • Investigate possibility of providing SMS capability to delegates • Email trees and electronic distribution lists ... need to access all Depot trees and other networks • Operator specific needs usually at bargaining time • Create a dispute database • Maintain/expand online delegates section of website • Promote social activities on website, sms and L/E • Monthly hookups of lead delegates with Organisers • Monthly contact by D/Cs with delegates in their area • Publicise all disputes that have been resolved • Minutes of all meetings distributed/accessible • Use surveying to check on progress of the division
Union Dues: Securing our future	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare paper to increase dues to \$20 per fortnight • Have a direct debit campaign, this will start by personal letter to each member • Prepare a paper for automatic future increases 		

Objectives	Tasks
Bargaining Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use ACTU 5 stage bargaining template • Insert Charter of Workplace Union Delegates rights into all deeds reached with employers • Organiser responsible to develop plan 6 months prior to expiry date • Workplace delegates to be involved in negotiations • Delegates involved in negotiations to be trained • Campaign delegates in workplace to promote / inform members of negotiation progress
Division Campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your Rights At Work Campaign • Minimum standards • Direct Debit • OHS
Divisional Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Strategic Plan that is in a living document • Monitor and control costs • Develop budgets • Develop/Implement administration Policies • Develop/Implement/Monitor Job Descriptions and assessment tools for employees • Develop Political strategy in line with the Branch • Develop Industry maps • Promote the union values, benefits and vision • Develop education strategy for employees

in brief

NEW MEMBERS KIT

A new information kit has been developed for new union members in the Locomotive Division. The kit contains up-to-date information on the Locomotive Divisional structure, services to members, membership and other union forms. If you are a new member, or if you have new employees in your workplace, copies of the Members Kit are available from the union office.

CATHOLIC TRANSPORT GUILD

The Catholic Transport Guild has been in existence since 1937. In that time, the Guild has carried out its objectives of the promotion of Christian values and financial assistance to charitable and religious organisations.

A monthly Mass is offered for all members and relatives throughout the year (living or deceased).

The Guild holds an annual Mass and breakfast in November for our members to get together.

The following Committee members are available if you have any enquiries regarding membership or details about the Guild:

President
Craig Austin
Mobile 0408 485 279

Vice President
John Lennon
(H) 9520 9972

Secretary
Nicolas Farla
(H) 9771 2206; (W) 8202 3425

Treasurer
Bruce Adams
(H) 9713 9612

The participation of Pacific National RTBU members

We can report that on that beautiful Sydney Spring day all four of us finished the 52 Kilometre course without major incident and a very good time was had.

As Crispy would say "No Wuckers".

A great variety of entrants graced the ride, some in dress up. One of our mob was especially impressed by this little effort.

We will be seeing all those that pledged, some time this week to gather all donations and hopefully will be in position to forward them on to the charities early next week.

Thank You Again





National Day of Union and Community Action

A major campaign has been organised in all major cities and regional centres around the country to maintain pressure and protest at the Federal Government's anti-worker and anti-union Workchoices legislation.

In NSW rallies will held in all major regional centres with major rallies in the Sydney CBD, with a Sky Channel Broadcast from the MCG in Melbourne.

Where – Belmore Park

(Cnr Eddy Avenue and Pitt Street
– Opposite Central Station)

Date – Thursday 30 November 2006

Time – Assemble from 8am
(broadcast starts at 8:30am)

Call to all RTBU Members

Make sure that the RTBU support for the Your Rights at Work Campaign remains strong and visible – start organising your time, activists in your workplace, friends and relatives to ensure a huge turn out.

Start checking book off days now and ensure you can come. More information will be distributed leading up to the National Day of Action.

For details of venues for rally points and Sky Channel broadcasts throughout NSW, check the website:
www.rightsatwork.com.au

Members attending the metropolitan rally please assemble at Belmore Park. Non-metropolitan members are urged to attend rallies in their local areas.