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eBULLETIN OF THE RTBU NSW LOCOMOTIVE DIVISION DELEGATE

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Southern & Silverton AWAs

Pacific National Grain Division Drought Management Plan

Pacific National has announced the cut back in staff throughout its operations within NSW & Victoria due to the continuation of Drought conditions.

Pacific National are currently finalising the expressions of interest for voluntary redundancy and redeployment options from members in Cootamundra, Junee, Temora, Parkes, Dubbo, Narrabri & Werris Creek and also the depots in Victoria.

In NSW the depots are downsizing and keeping just enough staff to service current contracts within the domestic market.

Locomotive Photos for Website

The R.T.B.U has launched our new website and we would like photos of enginemens at work if anyone has any non copyright high resolution digital photos that they would like to donate for our use, please send sample and contact details.

A last call reminder also that any members with historical photos, memorabilia or stories for the Locomotive history project, please contact the union office.

As reported recently the company is continuing to sign up employees on AWAs and is carrying on its business in total disregard to the changed industrial climate with the election of Federal Labor and its mandate from the Australian public for scrapping AWAs. In fact it was recently reported in the Daily Telegraph (10 Jan 08) where the Workplace Ombudsman Nicholas Wilson has announced an immediate investigation into claims that Wollongong University was offering staff only AWAs even though there is a collective agreement in place.

It is our intention to contact Silverton shortly with a view of negotiating a company wide agreement that will ultimately replace all other agreements.

Pacific National In cab audio recording

The Grain division has proposed a trial of in cab audio recording by fitting a 81Cl locomotive with the device, a meeting was held in the Hunter Valley on the 29th of November attended by the Divisional Secretary and Brian Glover (*acting as freight organiser*) where the proposal was flagged. It was agreed that a working party would be convened with Grant Barnett as our representative.

In the meantime the Intermodal Division decided to publish a rolling stock notice advising of a 6 months trial of CCTV & Audio recording on NR74. A notice of dispute has been served.

Stop Press; Pacific National Intermodal have decided to cancel their trial until proper consultation has occurred.

R.T.B.U Wollongong Office

It has been decided that it would be beneficial for the R.T.B.U to establish a presence in Wollongong due to the increase in membership with the Pacific National takeover of the BHP Rail Traffic. As rental accommodation is virtually non existent in Wollongong (*at decent rates*), we have decided to purchase one. This 1st floor office is situated on Crown St directly opposite the ramp coming up from the Station. The new office arrangements are being finalised and will require some fit-out work to get to a fully operational stage. We believe that once the Wollongong office is fully functional, our members and delegates will benefit from the fact that we have an office there and it will be a good investment for our future.

RailCorp News

Driver Assaults

The issue of train driver safety has again been raised with another driver being assaulted recently at Lidcombe. Members will remember the campaign during August last year (Footplates 11-13) where a range of measures were to be put in place. RailCorp has been implementing all the points that were agreed at that meeting.

However, RailCorp decided that the consultative forums would be the local management briefing sessions where management would provide information and feedback on security issues. We were not happy with this and have been having discussions around this concern and the incidents which originally resulted in the campaign.

Since the last incident, we have now convinced senior management that we needed to have regional consultative forums specifically for security issues. These meetings will now commence at the end of February.

Closure of Eveleigh Barracks

Countrylink have closed Eveleigh Barracks and crew accommodation is now at the Travelodge Motel in Wentworth Ave, Sydney.

A final inspection of this facility was conducted on the 18th of January and, after works carried out by the Travelodge, was found to comply with the R.T.B.U Motel Standard. Some minor enhancements to the facilities are being sought by the Locomotive Division, with only the issue of "whole floor allocation" remaining. It is anticipated that this issue will be resolved in the near future.

Alleged bullying and harassment

In a recent incident, a driver was removed from duty for refusing [after conducting a risk assessment] to work a train with defective equipment. The driver was financially penalised by being removed from his rostered weekend shifts whilst he waited a debrief over the incident. The R.T.B.U was successful in having the driver returned to duty, with full payment for his lost weekend shifts, and the setting up of working parties to review several rules and their interpretations, as well as a review of the debrief process.

Trainer Driver Position Description dispute

RailCorp continues in its attempts to change this position description, despite it being a recognised agreement, and refuses to acknowledge the productivity gains it will achieve by its proposal. The RTBU stands by its right to pursue this issue through a Functional agreement and a Conference is now scheduled in the Australian Industrial Relations Commission on the 8th February 2008.

Team Leader Concept

A meeting was held with RailCorp on the 23rd of January to discuss the proposed changes to the Team Leader role. RailCorp have proposed to pay an "allowance" for this role and fill it by an "expression of interest" rather than create a "grade" and a full time position. This proposed "allowance" will replace all others paid when in this role, such as, "lift up/lay back", ETR and cab allowances. Also, there will be a 30 minute "unpaid" meal break! The Allowance is only based on the Driver Thereafter rate. This means that Trainer Drivers, for example will only be paid the Driver thereafter rate plus allowance, not Driver Trainer rate plus allowance, if they apply for this role. RailCorp is reconsidering its position and a further meeting is planned for February.

Freight Australia EA negotiations

The negotiations are still ongoing. The final clauses have been prepared for consideration and will need some fine tuning once completed. The last meeting was held in Melbourne on Wednesday 19th December 2007 where NSW was represented by Kevin Pryor and the Divisional Secretary.

New Membership System

Late last year a new membership system (Kudos) was installed for the Branch by a company called Kaitech they have installed this system in 26 Unions in Queensland, we are the first union in NSW followed closely by the CEPU who are having the system fitted shortly. This new system will improve our capacity for membership information, and will also give us an increased organising capacity the organisers will be trained in the new year in the functions of the new system.

Bob is the man

The Assistant Secretary, Bob Newham answered the call recently when he was seconded to the union office for three months his role has been to prepare the Loco Division and its members for the upcoming EA campaign and to act in the role of the Divisional Secretary whilst he was on leave. By all accounts Bob did an excellent job and he is now back on the job making the Sydney commuters happy.

Authorised by Alex Claassens, Divisional Secretary

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