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World Youth Day - Rosters & Diagrams

Hunter Valley Coal

The Optalert trials have finally recommenced in the Hunter Valley. It is only for a two-week duration in order to validate the application of the algorithm. Whilst this stage of the trial is not strictly an "operational" trial it has exposed a number of problems which have been encountered by the users.

We have finally seen a number of Terminal Drivers released onto the mainline. Whilst this has been long overdue it is certainly a step in the right direction. Northern Coal have started to implement a recruitment program and faced with the expected number of members who will probably leave the industry within the next few years it is imperative that this recruitment continues.

Another initiative that is being trialed in the Hunter Valley is the bi-monthly local consultative meeting which has been established in an attempt to resolve any small issues and to allow for a more informal consultation approach rather than going through the more formal dispute settling procedures.

Union Due Increases

In line with Divisional Conference policy, a proposal to increase annual union dues, which was held off in 2007, will be presented to Divisional Council at its meeting on June 17 & 18 for endorsement. It is anticipated that any increase in union dues will take effect after completion of the RailCorp 2008 EA.

There have been several consultative meetings regarding World Youth Day and most of the issues that have been represented by the working party have been dealt with. But there are some unresolved issues particularly the manner in which this special event has been dealt with.

It should be noted that this time the process has resulted in a loss of some of our rostering conditions in particular the construct of the rosters and the ability for our members to be able to claim lift up and lay back. We also have the affect that our members will be working extra hours and kilometres with little or no financial gain.

RailCorp has also identified other issues that will be discussed in the lead up to the event;

1. Meal Room Space Allocation.
2. Demand and Supply of InterCity Train Crew.
3. Amount of Suburban Drivers and Guards that will be needed.
4. Overtime.
5. Stations looking for Crowd Management Volunteers.

Annual Leave - Shoulders of WYD period.

Disputes

We have a number of outstanding disputes with Pacific National at the moment and they are briefly listed below:

Industrial division still have an outstanding safety issue with shunting the Sandown Petrol Depot's as we believe that the current shunting procedure by Enfield Depot with 3 persons (2 on Loco and 1 on ground shunting) is the safest method of operation, management would like to take 1 man of the Locomotive. Our Divisional OH&S Co-ordinator (Keith McMahon) has been asked to assist in this dispute.

A Dispute has also arisen at Antienne as result of confusion in relation to the type of working in operation and the length of shifts to be worked. We have given a proposal to management for them to consider which may provide the solution.

RailCorp EA 2008

In summary, the process was initiated by the Combined Unions in August 2007 seven months prior to the expiration of the previous agreement. We lodged our claim with the AIRC on the 27th November 07 after being endorsed by our members during October (*following a depot tour*). RailCorp did not place any demands on the CRU until the 20th of December 07.

To date there has been in excess of 40 meetings with RailCorp Management on both the EA negotiations and the Consolidation process.

The campaign committee is working well with continuing to provide strategic direction to the negotiating team and distributing information to the membership and to date some 20 Information bulletins have been sent out to the members. Members have instructed the negotiating team to pursue the CRU Log of Claims, and there are still a number of outstanding issues that are unresolved.

Another 2 week tour has just been completed on the 21st of May 08 with members unanimously endorsing the next steps which included the combined unions lodging an application with the AIRC to commence a ballot for us to be able to take protected industrial action. The application was successful and we have now been granted approval to commence the ballot.

It is now vitally important that all RailCorp members ensure that their details held in the union office are correct as the AEC will be conducting the ballot and we have to get a 50% plus one return.

Asset Inspection Mapping System [AIMS]

RailCorp wrote to us recently in relation to placing recording equipment in the cab to film the trackside infrastructure. Following a circular being sent to the delegates for their views a letter has been sent back to RailCorp indicating that we have no objection as long as the equipment does not interfere with the safe operation of the train and the in cab policy will apply.

PPP Project

This project raises a range of issues that will affect Train Crew in a number of areas as identified below but it should be noted that delegates that attend some of the meetings with RailCorp continually state that Management are not consulting in good faith. It should also be noted and come as no surprise that the Government requested IPART report last week recommended a range of draconian measures.

These items are under discussion as a result of the introduction of the PPP train;
The crew cab, The Guards' relocation, Car Markers, Signal Sightings, Infrastructure changes, OSP 6&7, CCTV and Transpositions

Shortage of Driver Trainer Numbers

RailCorp have been advertising to fill Vacancies but due to the fact that they have not been successful in recruiting sufficient numbers to meet the training task a shortfall has been identified. Meetings have been held for some time in an attempt to resolve this issue, It was readily agreed that there are not enough Driver Trainers available for the influx of trainees, and one of the options that was discussed was the introduction of an additional position that would assist the Driver Trainers and release them for the more critical Driver Trainer duties.

Several options have been floated in the past such as our proposal of System Drivers through to Coaches.

A meeting was held recently where it was decided that the best way forward was to create a position of Acting Driver Trainer on a trial basis, in the Illawarra region for a fixed term of 3 months only, working under the same conditions and pay rates of the current Driver Trainers. It was also agreed that for the trial period Drivers with 3 years driving experience would be invited to apply by way of Expression of Interest.

This concept is being trialed to alleviate the pressures being produced on the training programs through lack of Driver Trainer numbers. It is hoped that taking this initial step will encourage more drivers to apply for the Driver Trainer role and give them the competencies required and lead to them taking on a full time role.

Use of Petersham Trainers on Train with Trainees

Due to insufficient Driver Trainer numbers a decision was made to use Petersham Trainers for the on road training. As a result of our discussions it has now been agreed that only permanent trainers who were formally driver trainers, and are a fully competent, Category 1 Rail Safety Workers would be utilised. If they are utilised it will only be on a freelancing capacity and they will not be wearing a drivers' uniform

Driver Assaults

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

We are pleased to announce that the regional consultative forums specifically for security issues have commenced and by all reports the delegates that attended these meetings were encouraged that these meetings will assist in achieving better intelligence and better placement of security personnel which hopefully result in less driver assaults.

National Issues

National Transport Commission

The National Transport Commission has been busy and working on a number of projects which has the potential of directly impacting on the role of a NSW Train Driver regardless of what sector they are employed in, some of these are listed below;

- National Policy Statement for Recognition of Industry Standards.

The draft policy is to be forwarded to (TACE) Transport Advisory Chief Executives for comment by 25th Apr prior to submitting to ATC for approval.

- Review of National Medical Standards

This is the 5 yearly review for both the Road & Rail sectors and we will be involved.

- National Rail Safety Data Strategy Report

The R.T.B.U has provided a submission on this project and the report will be forwarded to ATC for out of session approval subject to final comments.

- Competency Based Training for Rail Safety Regulators

This project is now completed and NSW have instituted it and have received a diploma.

- Rail safety Package Steering Committee

They are developing Units of competence to describe skills - knowledge required for a person to operate effectively in their occupation within the workplace and must contain descriptor.

- Proposed Guidance for Tourism and Heritage Rail Sector

- Maintenance of Rail Safety Legislative Reforms

Our National Office is actively involved in many of these projects and has provided submissions to others. As always the NSW Locomotive Division will be involved in some of these projects and if not the National Office will keep us informed and advise when it is necessary for us to become involved.

National Locomotive Division Committee

The National Locomotive Committee will meet this week in Melbourne. The national committee brings together locomotive representatives from all States to discuss and plan around common issues.

Previously the Committee met every two years as part of National Council. It was resolved at National Council last year to hold the meetings separately and in a different location every six months in order to dedicate sufficient time and focus on the issues.

Independent Railways of Australia

Collective agreement negotiations commenced on 13th May with a discussion paper put forward that encompasses the members' log of claims. Further meetings are scheduled to take place where it is envisaged that agreed changes to the discussion paper will form the basis of a finalised agreement. Members have also obtained approval from management for the formation of "tool-box" meetings that will initiate a process for discussing continuous & co-operative improvement in the workplace.

Skilled Engineering

Discussions have been held with Skilled in relation to their decision to re enter the labour hire market in NSW they have also expressed a desire that they would be available to assist in the long term viability of our industry by ensuring that they will provide for opportunities to train future Train Drivers. A proposal has been drafted and sent to the company for their consideration another meeting will be held shortly.

Southern & Silverton

Discussions are still ongoing with the company in relation to a new agreement, verbal discussions indicate that the company is prepared to enter into meaningful discussions, a position paper has been sent to the company for their consideration and we await their response.

Grain Crisis

As previously reported the numerous meetings that have been held in regard to this issue appear to have paid off advice has now been received that Pacific national has been successful in their negotiations and they have now secured a twelve month contract with the state government to continue the branch line operation until June 2008, and they have also secured a 5 year contract with industry for the main line operation.

While it is good news that we have secured the jobs in the short term a long term strategy will need to be developed particularly in relation to the Branch line operation. We will continue negotiations with Government and industry to try and achieve long term viability of the Branch Lines

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