



TRANSIT NEWS



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Protest, Rosters, Discipline and Rabbit Problems!

Enough Is Enough Say Transits

The RTBU met with RailCorp management in relation to safety issue effecting members. At the meeting, the RTBU sought to qualify:

- ***What RailCorp understood the role of Transit Officers to be?***
- ***What are RailCorp's operational expectations in relation to the Transit Officer role? and***
- ***Would RailCorp undertake an independent risk assessment of the Transit Officers role?***

RailCorp declined to allow any independent risk assessment as they believe the information already provided was sufficient. RailCorp's response demonstrates their ongoing refusal to take the safety of Transit Officers seriously.

The RTBU's Response

Recent mass meetings of RTBU Transit Officers held at Parramatta and Central resolved to take action to protect themselves from attack by violent passengers. As a result of ongoing RailCorp inaction Transit Officers passed the following resolution:

All TO's from today will not intervene in any confrontation with passengers that is likely to end up in a violent situation and under no circumstances will we arrest offenders as we now feel that we are at imminent risk of being disciplined and dismissed.

The action was sparked by a number of incidents where Transit Officers took action to protect members of the public and then were assaulted themselves. Yet, rather than receiving support from management Transit Officers were investigated and disciplined by management for doing their job.

RTBU Transit Officers have requested a meeting with the Minister for Transport so he can explain why we are being disciplined for doing our job.

Transit Officers have received support from the RTBU Guards Sub-Division who moved a motion supporting the key role Transit Officers undertake in providing a safe work environment for all employees.

Rostering

Rostering is one of the hottest issues still facing Transit Officers. The RTBU with the ASU have attended RailCorp management consultations about a new roster. The combined union effort has resulted in management considering a number of proposals more in line with what Transit Officers are seeking.

Both unions told management a 9.5 or 10 hour roster was the preferred roster length for the majority of Transit Officers

Attending Interviews/Counselling Your Rights

RTBU Transit Members need to be aware of their legal rights when they attend formal or informal interviews and/or counselling sessions.

RTBU members are entitled to select a support person to be with them at interview or counselling sessions with management. **Management has no right to appoint someone to be your support person.** If management try to do this you should:

1. Decline to be interviewed until you can have a support person of your choosing present.
2. Immediately contact your RTBU delegate for assistance.

If at any stage during an interview you feel harassed, confused or you are not sure of what is happening you have the right to stop the interview in order to seek advice. The RTBU advises all members not to attend any interview or provide any comment to management without a RTBU representative present.

Uniforms

New blue uniforms were trialled between 20 & 27 of February 2008 A team in each region wore the blue uniform out on the job. Delegates from the RTBU and ASU met with management on 11 February 2008 to discuss the trial. Management stated a survey of passengers, staff and transits was undertaken during the trial to gauge the response to the new uniforms. Members will be advised of the results of the trial when they are released by RailCorp.

Seniors Appeal Process

A meeting was held with RailCorp management regarding the Seniors' Appeal Process. Management insisted the process was fair, in accordance the current policies and nothing new.

RailCorp's current policy means a person who loses an appeal at the Transport Appeals Board automatically gets placed on an eligibility list created from the original order of merit. The RTBU is waiting for RailCorp's response on this matter.

RailCorp's Protests Rabbit Suits



Management ask who put that rascally rabbit in the newsletter?

It appears the last newsletter with a rabbit photo upset RailCorp who wrote:

...RailCorp takes issue with a picture that appears depicting a person dressed as a rabbit while holding and pointing a firearm.

RailCorp found the depiction "objectionable" as it:

...trivialise the efforts of the Corporation to outfit and equip Transit Officers, but it undermines efforts on the part of RailCorp and its staff to address safety issues in the workplace. This is particularly disappointing at a time when we are working with Transit Officers, Station staff and Train Crew on specific security issues within the Network. In addition to this, RailCorp is working hard to continue to build a responsible public image for our Transit Officers.

I trust you will understand why the picture in the article is viewed in this way and ask that the author considers more carefully what they publish in future.

The RTBU taking such criticism of our newsletter to heart provided the following response:

Dear Mr Greenhill

Re: Transit News – Volume 3 Issue No. 6

I refer to your letter of 28 December 2007 regarding RailCorp taking issue with a picture of a person dressed as a rabbit.

The Transit News is a newsletter produced by Transit Officers for Transit Officers which relies on a satirical presentation of issues affecting Transit Officers. The editors of the newsletter believe this format allows them to inform RTBU members of serious workplace issue while ensuring the publication is engaging. Indeed, I modestly suggest the publication has reached somewhat of a cult status within your organisation. It is regrettable that RailCorp finds a man dressed in a rabbit suit so objectionable.

Your correspondence further suggests the article trivialises the effort of RailCorp to outfit and equip Transit Officers while also undermining efforts by RailCorp to address workplace safety issues. What this and previous articles have highlighted, is the ongoing lack of consultation by RailCorp and the organisations continued failure to adhere to public commitments and undertakings provided to its employees and the RTBU.

Further, the continuing assaults of RTBU members and Transit Officers suggest management is failing to effectively protect workers in their workplace. This is an ongoing issue that has been constantly represented to RailCorp by the RTBU.

I will raise RailCorp's artistic concerns with the publication's editors however, I suggest until RailCorp is prepared to participate in meaningful consultation, effectively address workplace violence and adhere to its public undertakings it will leave itself open to further lampooning by the editors of this satirical publication.

Yours sincerely, Nick Lewocki, Secretary.



As a result of RailCorp's letter the RTBU took direct action to deal with the editors and the rabbit involved.