



THE RTBU NEWS



28 September 2006
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Management Neglect, Shortages & Death Traps

RTBU Members Expose Station Shortage Lies

RailCorp's failure to maintain adequate staffing levels on the CityRail network would have only resulted in a swag of railway station closures without much public interest had it been any other week. However, the inadequate staffing levels became so bad that it placed the safety of school children at risk.

The action of RTBU members has forced the NSW Government to direct RailCorp to ensure all shifts are filled on stations during operating hours.

In response to a petition from members complaining about staff shortages and the non-filling of rosters the RTBU commenced a public campaign highlighting in the media the impact these shortages were having on passengers and the increase of potential safety risks.



Daily Telegraph 18.09.06

The RTBU was advised by members that Warrabee Station, which has large numbers of school children joining trains, was left unattended from 1:30PM on Thursday 14 September 2006. The local schools were advised and it was left to teachers to supervise the school children on the station.

The RTBU's Secretary, Nick Lewocki, told the media, "It is time the NSW Government directed RailCorp management to cease the cost cutting currently taking place and immediately recruit sufficient staff to fill the 300 vacancies that exist across the CityRail network. Rather than handing out chocolate bars at stations RailCorp

should focus on the safety of all passengers including school children who use the passenger network. RailCorp management have become obsessed with cost cutting which has left passengers with reduced customer services, dirtier stations, station closures and significant reduction in safety".



Staff shortages are either closing City Rail stations or leaving workers isolated and vulnerable to attack.

The RTBU called on the Premier to direct Senior RailCorp management to immediately ensure all stations are properly staffed during their hours of operation in order to ensure the travelling public and children have access to a safe and reliable transport system."

The RTBU has raised these concerns directly with the Minister for Transport on numerous occasions with no action taken by the State Government to provide a safe and reliable service for the people of NSW.

The RTBU is encouraging members to undertake risk assessments at their stations to determine the minimum staffing levels to operate the station safely. Further, members should be aware that if you are utilised in higher graded positions you must be paid at the higher rate of pay. If you have acted up and not received the higher rate contact your RTBU delegate or official immediately.

It is a sad indictment on RailCorp that RTBU members now not only have to do their jobs but also have to advocate for sufficient staff to maintain clean and safe stations.

RTBU Members Expose Belmore College Death Trap

RailCorp Management's neglect of safety at Belmore College has turned it into a potential death trap for all RTBU members attending training at the College.

RTBU safety delegates at Belmore Training College have exposed what only can be described as negligent behaviour by RailCorp management. The Chair of the OH&S Committee and a local OH&S representative, both RTBU members, and Lead organiser George Panigiris inspected the College site with WorkCover.

The RTBU initially received a number of complaints in relation to RailCorp's failure to address concerns expressed about the fire safety within the College. The initial complaints included the failure of RailCorp to fix a faulty electrical switch and to clear access to two fire exits which were blocked and could not be opened. One designated fire exit was covered by a white board with computer terminals and wiring behind it.

the facilities. One only has to remember the number of fires where people have been killed because there were no fire alarms or the existing fire alarms were not properly serviced.

Further, WorkCover found that fire exits within the building and external assembly points were not correctly identified. In addition, there was no designated fire warden in charge of the building which was described as 'highly risky' by WorkCover.

If this wasn't enough, the inspecting team also discovered a storage area underneath the College where unmarked chemicals were being stored and the store room itself was described as a complete hazard.



Failure to maintain fire alarms can mean not only loss of property but also loss of life

22/09 2006 08:31:47 FAX WorkCover Authority of New South Wales COPY OF ORIGINAL 7-116459

Improvement Notice

This notice is issued to: **0000000** Reason for Issue

In respect of: **00000000**

Under the Occupational Health & Safety Act 2001 (NSW) relating to a site:

1. **00000000** at **00000000**

Part A - Improvement Notice

1. In the event of the Inspector's view:

X (1) an offence under section 131 of the Occupational Health & Safety Act 2001 (NSW) relating to a site.

2. In the event of the Inspector's view:

X (2) an offence under section 131 of the Occupational Health & Safety Act 2001 (NSW) relating to a site.

Part B - Party to Breach

1. Name: **RAIL CORPORATION NEW SOUTH WALES**

2. Address: **RAIL CORPORATION NEW SOUTH WALES**

3. Address when inspection took place: **00000000**

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One of a number of highly embarrassing Improvement Notices issued by WorkCover demanding RailCorp adhere to safety regulations and not to expose their employees to unsafe workplaces.

But on inspection, much worse was to be found. The fire alarms within the College were faulty and could not be activated meaning if there was a fire in the College there would have been no early warning for RTBU members training within

As a result of the inspection, WorkCover issued 3 improvement notices giving RailCorp, 14 days to fix all issues relating to fire exits, hazardous material, fire alarms, appropriate exit advice, having fire wardens full time and the regular checking of fire extinguishers. It was only as a result of RTBU members and delegates refusing to accept the repeated brush off by RailCorp management and their courage to organise to have WorkCover brought in that a potential injury or death to their colleagues has been averted.

So when you read RailCorp's **What's News** of September 19 which states:

'Safety for staff and passengers using the network has significantly improved this year'.

Remember, it is just a pity RailCorp's spin falls short of their actual commitment to the safety of RTBU members in the workplace.

If you have a story about a successful campaign or action in your workplace please contact the RTBU's Executive Officer, Mark Morey on (02) 9264 2511 or by email: mmorey@rtbu-nsw.asn.au