

# RTBU WA BRANCH

## Newsletter



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## From the Secretary's Pen

Dear Members,

We are happy to report that for the last quarter there have been no major accidents in the industry with our members, which in our current state of uncertainty with COVID19 and all the restrictions that follow the virus is certainly a positive report.

## Avon Valley Accident

The Christmas Avon Valley crash, whilst the preliminary investigation findings have been released the final outcomes of the investigations are yet to be finalised. There will be an update and link posted to all members on our facebook page.

In Unity, Craig McKinley

## Face Book

We now have own face book page.  
<https://www.facebook.com/RTBUWesternAustralia/>

## Covid19 Update

In these uncertain times our industry has remained largely unaffected by the Covid19 virus. Thankfully we have had the ability to continue on with business as usual. While this virus is still a major health pandemic for our country we do ask that each member continue to stay vigilant with maintaining the correct health and safety routines set in place to keep ourselves and our loved ones in safe hands. If you are having any issues in your workplace with this please contact the union office immediately for assistance.  
Stay safe members

## Mental Health

In times like these the uncertainty of the world around us can overwhelm many. These stressful times can not only affect your private lives but also your work life. Whilst your employer has EAP services available, I know members sometimes feel uncomfortable about using these services. I will always recommend talking to family and friends and seeing a medical professional. We do have resources in the office and our door is always open to assist anyone who may be struggling. Please call for assistance.

[Http://helpingminds.org.au](http://helpingminds.org.au) 1800811747  
<http://blackdoginstitutue.org.au>  
<http://www.thriveatwork.org.au> 0892664668  
<http://beyondblue.org.au> 1300224636  
<http://lifelinewa.org.au> 131114



Railway construction circa 1926, Western Australia

# Industry news

## Employment numbers

The union has been meeting with employers to raise our concern about the potential growth in the rail industry and the inadequacies in these companies to meet the increasing demand of growth. Often these companies will only employ limited trainees but these numbers are not enough to fill the ever increasing void of depot numbers. The next few years we have a large number of members looking to retire and our union is very concerned that employers of this industry cant seem to meet this demand. The union has been working hard to expand the rail industry and incorporate the growth of employment for its members.



Carriages and vans being repaired or built in the car shop at the Midland Railway Workshops during the 1930s

## Discrimination concerns

A concerning trend has been highlighted with an employer discriminating against safety reps for fulfilling their elected duties and using the potential of code of conduct breaches against its employees as a disciplinary tool against our members for raising genuine safety concerns . Work safe have been made aware and are now involved.

## Incident Investigation

Work safe are now also involved in the investigation of a dangerous goods train (caustic train) which had separated while travelling on the mainline and put back together and left in service with out adequate inspection. These actions could have led to a potential major incident involving our members. The investigation is still ongoing and we will update our members of the outcomes when they become available.



Midland rail workshop

## Prosecution victory

We also have successfully prosecuted against an employer for rostering too many shifts to a member which is in fact a breach of our EA in the South West. This seems to be a continuing breach which all our members are now fully aware is against the rules. We continue to monitor these potential breaches for the good of our members.

## Travel Restrictions

Unfortunately with the Covid 19 virus and the initial travel restrictions that followed the union was limited in its depot visits. Fortunately now that these restrictions have relaxed slightly we are now mobilising and are committed to more depot visits.

## Union gets member reinstated

Your union can happily report that we had a major victory for one of our members by having their position reinstated after the Return to Work medical was declined by the company. We are glad to have supported this member in their time of need.

## PPE concerns for our members

The Collie depot has an ongoing issue with the Collie employees not being issued with the correct PPE to perform their safety spotting duties for the coal train unloading. This has led to them being exposed to concerning levels of coal dust, which can lead to a lung condition called Black Lung. This lung disease was essentially wiped out through the perseverance of union members fighting for their safety and correct PPE equipment but in recent times and through companies becoming more and more relaxed over safety has seen a rise in reported black lung cases. This disease is a killer and it is something that we need to continue to fight for our members safety to prevent anyone contracting this hideous disease. The investigation on this matter is still being pursued and we will update the membership on any news and outcomes when they are available.

## Industry news

### 14 Day brake testing

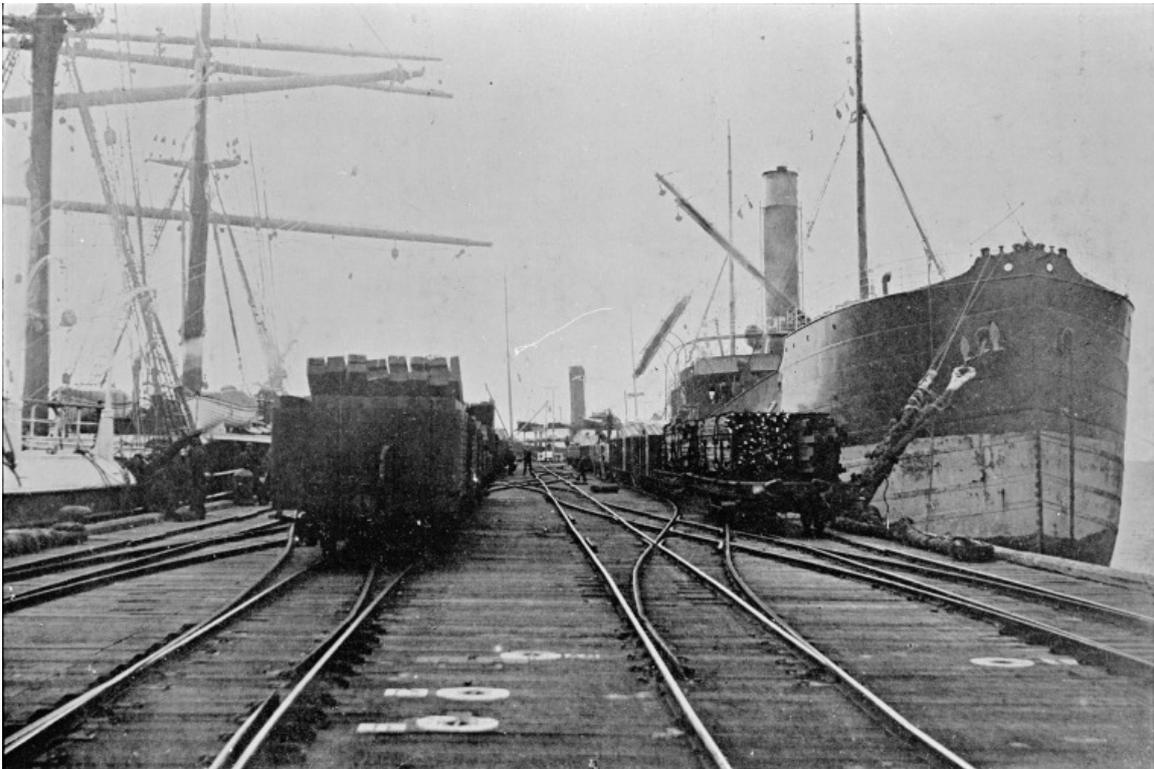
Presently in the Narngulu Aurizon depot they are trialling a 14 day brake test cycle on their iron ore fleet. The union believes that not only does this present poor maintenance of the fleet but it is simply a dangerous act to have established. There seems to be a complete lack of care from the company in this matter with the ongoing running of trains being of more importance.

### Long end running

The Office of National Rail safety Regulator (ONSR) is now fazing out long end running. Long end running is not a standard known in the Eastern states. It is only accepted here in WA. In 1980 the industry suffered with 4 deaths which the coroner attributed to long end running. The rail companies are long over due for this practice to cease.

### Welcome new members

We would like to take the time to welcome and thank our newest members not only from our depots but those members who have travelled from the Eastern states to assist Pacific National and Aurizon with its staffing issues. Its the thoughtfulness of our members that keeps this industry moving. Once again thank you.



**Bunbury Jetty, ships docked, and rail cars loaded with timber.  
129208PD: Bunbury Jetty, ships docked, and rail wagons loaded with timber,  
approximately 1907.**

## Business News

There was a Covid19 forum held in June this year with the transport minister Rita Saffioti and the agriculture minister Alannah MacTiernan to discuss stimulus spending in the wake of the Covid19 impact.

The RTBU presented information on infrastructure spending on the Tier 3 lines in the Central Wheat belt. Whilst there were other projects from other industries put forward for spending discussions it was the Tier 3 project that got the endorsement from the government ahead of all the other submissions.

This is a great outcome for the RTBU and hopefully will lead to the reopening of the Central Wheat belt grain lines. Which will mean jobs for the future not only for running of trains but the manufacturing of wagons as well. There is the potential of 100 to 150 grain wagons to be built.

The government has committed \$250,000 to the Tier 3 engineering assessment.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of August 2020 there will be a meeting in Kulin with all the stake holders to discuss this exciting opportunity

If you are interested in these discussions, please contact the union office for more information.



A WAGR E class steam locomotive hauling the first train of bulk wheat in Western Australia 1931.

## McCarthur Minerals Update

Last month the union was approached by the Operational CEO of McCarthur Minerals to announce that they had reached a track access agreement with ARC for the haulage of Iron ore from the Yalgarrin region to Esperance. This is a huge step forward on this project and your union was asked to put in a media submission discussing this opportunity. This submission covered the agreement that had been reached and its potential for jobs moving forward.

This project has had its fair share of doubters but your union has supported McCarthur Minerals and has worked with the government to overcome any hurdles for the benefit of everyone in the region.

This project is now becoming a serious reality and McCarthur Minerals are seriously considering building the 250 wagons needed locally. This alone will be a massive victory for our sector.

## Kailon Clay Mine Update

Kailon Clay is a clay mine situated near Wikipin in the Great Southern which has a mine next to one of our proposed Tier 3 grain lines. This company would like to containerise its clay product and freight to North Fremantle. There is a proposed 200 to 300 thousand tonnes to be freighted next year. I have been in discussion with the CEO of the company to make this a reality for the rail industry including the reopening of the Tier 3 lines. If we fail to get this product on rail it means there will be an increase of potentially 5000 truck movements with this product on our roads annually.

I have also held discussions with our government to help move these discussions along faster.

This further proves if Tier 3 rail lines can be re-established there is potential for them to become multi user lines and not just for grain haulage.

## New membership prospects in the North West

An exciting new membership prospect has opened up for the RTBU with FMG announcing a \$1 billion dollar rail project for the Eliwana site.

In January 2020 the premier Mark McGowan announced the grant of the special rail licence for the construction of the rail line which is being undertaken by John Holland.

The proposed 130km of rail line is hoped to employ up to 400 workers on its construction.

John Holland has said it is happy for the RTBU to represent its workforce.

This is a great opportunity to continue to expand and increase our membership base in the North West.



Western Australian Government Railways T class locomotive, no. 165.  
229407PD:

# SAVE GRAIN ON RAIL

SAFEST, CLEANEST, CHEAPEST AND IT'S OURS

## PUBLIC MEETING

1pm, Monday, 24th August  
Kulin Recreation Centre

**Please join us to discuss tier 3 rail!**



Ready to get on board?

Contact us at [savegrainonrail@gmail.com](mailto:savegrainonrail@gmail.com)

or visit [www.savegrainonrail.com.au](http://www.savegrainonrail.com.au) to join the campaign

**WHEATBELT RAILWAY RETENTION ALLIANCE**



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