



# RTBU

## RTBU WA PTA BRANCH UPDATE

### VOLUME 3 ISSUE 6

## SECRETARY'S ADDRESS

For those of us who have been around long enough to remember, there was a time when whether you worked in 'freight' or 'passenger', you were a member of the one Federal RTBU Branch here in our great State of Western Australia (the West Australian Branch).

As you may or may not be aware, and as a result of the discovery of some discrepancies in 2009, the WA PTA Branch, to which you are a member of today, was born. This resulted in those related to 'passenger' formally separating from those in 'freight', who instead remained members of the West Australian Branch.

Ever since, efforts have been made to bring us back together, and we are now so close.

As of recent, on behalf of our National Secretary Mark Diamond, a number of documents, letters, and the like have been sent regarding the amalgamation of WA PTA Branch and the WA Branch. Or more simply, the bringing back together of passenger and freight to create the **Western Australian Branch**. This has been a work in progress for many years, and supported by the both branches, as the 'split' was always intended to be temporary.

There is much more work to be done, because whilst the amalgamation of the two current Federal Branches is looking promising, the State Branch, currently connected to the WA PTA Branch via a Section 71, will require a new Section 71 to connect it to the proposed amalgamated **Western Australian Branch**.

There is a process that must occur for any new Section 71 to be achieved, and whilst it isn't a difficult process, it is a comprehensive process that requires a number of steps to be followed in a very particular order. I am working collaboratively with National Office to ensure that everything that needs to be done is done. It is worth noting that all the work going on behind the scenes to make all this happen has its legal complexities, but they are being taken care of by National Office. So, I wish to openly thank them for that.

So what is next? Well, now that we know what the structure of the amalgamated **Western Australian Branch** will be, work is now under way to make the required rule changes to the State Union rules so that the eligibility to membership will be 'substantially' the same, and so that the Officer Holder positions will be the same. Then, and only then, will an application for a Section 71 be approved. Once a Section 71 is approved, a 'Deed of Agreement' will likely need to be arranged between the **Western Australian Branch** (Federal) and State Union. Clear as mud right?

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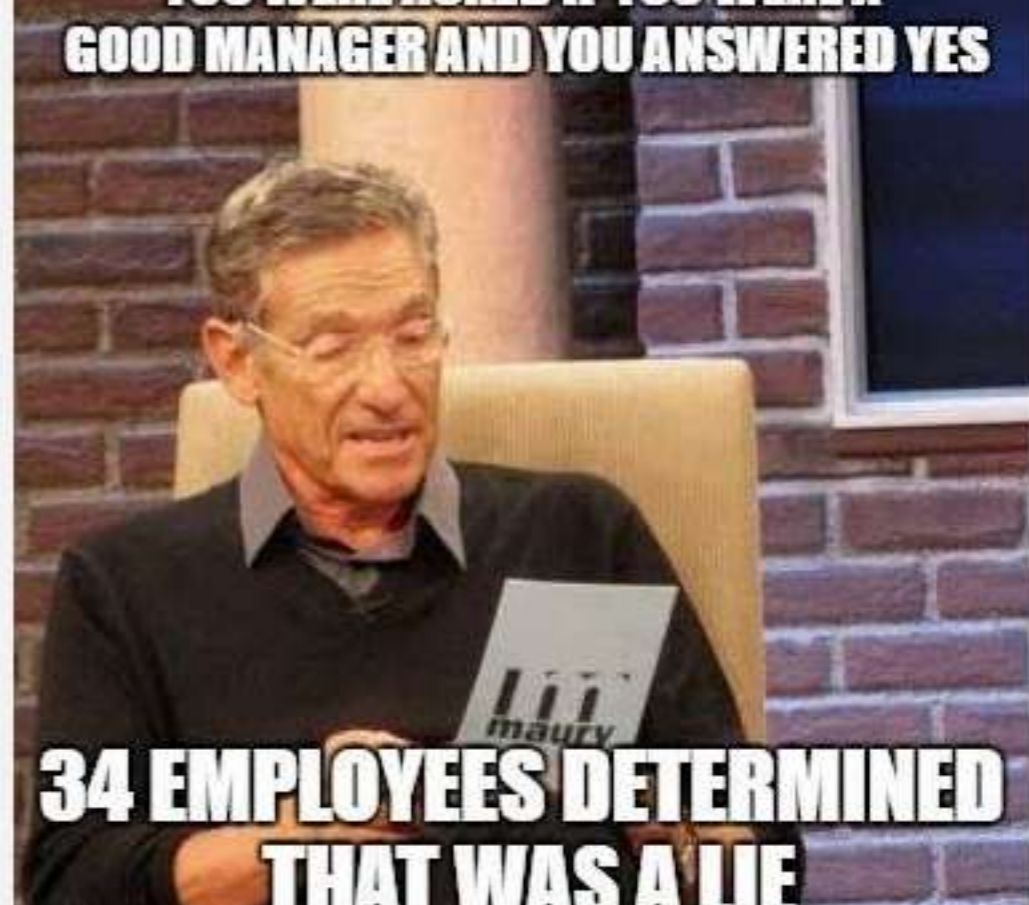
### A Piece of Advice

*"Deliberate much before saying or doing anything, for you will not have the power of recalling what has been said or done."*



Branch Secretary Joshua Dekuyer

## UNION MEME



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## OUT ON TRACK

Below are just some of the recent and current issues/matters attended to by our Union:

- Attended numerous and various meetings with UnionsWA and the Public Sector Alliance to continue our strategy on breaking the current Wages Policy.
- Assisted a member have their annual leave balance re-credited and the leave substituted with sick leave hours.
- Supported numerous members through discipline investigations including drafting responses to allegations and findings, attending interviews, and viewing the CCTV of incidents and the like.
- Nominated for the position of Labor's 'Transport, Roads, Infrastructure and Planning' conveyor for 2022 with an outcome TBC soon.
- Completed media training organised by UnionsWA but conducted by Newgate Communications.
- Attended the Workers Compensation Reform Briefing session, provided feedback and sought clarity on the proposed new Act for workers.
- Had numerous meetings with the PTA and Reviewer Tony Beech, and provided feedback and input on the upcoming Railcar Driver Work Value Review, now set to commence October 11.
- Met with Trinx Lawyers to address some tenant issues relating to the State Union's commercial rental properties.
- Attended a Trainee Railcar Driver induction with Urban Rail Sub Branch President Terry Joy, to sign up new members to the Union.
- Issued a \$1500 mortality payment to the family of Senior Transit Officer & Workplace Delegate Michael Ioppolo who passed away in tragic circumstances. Also, attended his funeral in support to his family and the Transit Officer Unit as a whole.
- Met with Security Sub Branch EBA representatives to continue discussions on their current EBA negotiations.
- Referred and managed members interactions with industrial, family, criminal, and workers/criminal compensation lawyers.
- Attended the State Budget Lock-Up and reviewed in details the Budget papers focusing on the Wages Policy and Metronet.
- Responded to emails, calls, and provided advice daily to countless members on a range of workplace topics and issues.
- Conducted numerous site visits including visits on the train lines, sheds & depots, maintenance facilities and the like.
- Attended a national hook up with representatives from ONRSR, the ATSB, and the RTBU's National Locomotive Division to advocate for further changes to the proposed mandatory in-cab surveillance initiative.
- Attended, chaired, and wrote the minutes of the recent drivers JCC. Issued minutes to attendees for review (soon to be released).
- Had a meeting with PTA OHS Manager & OSH Group's Chief Operating Officer to discuss and improve the recent Medical FAQ.
- Attended a Customer Service Delegates meeting and also organised future release to commence a 'Log of Claims' for the upcoming EBA.

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## MEETING WITH THE MINISTER

On September 1, Industrial Minister George Johnston and I met with the Transport Minister Rita Saffioti. At this meeting we discussed a number of matters including late night train services, Perth forecourt, the future of PTA Carpark Attendants, mandatory testing for diseases, the bringing in-house of Revenue Protection Officers, expanding property boundaries for Transit Officers, and a number of other matters too.

The good news is there is some positive movement in many of these areas due to our persistent advocacy. To give credit where credit is due, we understand the PTA has also shared or supported some of our positions and recommendations. We understand that we will likely see the free late night services become paid services in January 2022. A move that will assist our Transit Officers in being able to make services safer for all.

In addition, we know the Mandatory Testing (Infectious Diseases) Act 2014 is now currently being reviewed with the commitment to include, at the very least, mandatory testing for certain infectious diseases of persons reasonably suspected of having transferred bodily fluids to Transit Officers acting in the course of duty. Something we have been lobbying for.



## WAR FAR FROM OVER

Back in July's newsletter you may have seen the article titled 'Waging War!' It identified that our Union, along with a number of other public sector unions, were fed up with the Wages Policy.

The Public Sector Alliance was formed and we commenced our campaign against the State's decision to extend the Wages Policy to at least 2023, in where a review would be conducted to consider converting the \$1,000 annual wage increase to a CPI based increase.

Many of you signed the petition, that we ultimately provided to the State Premier (and Treasurer) Mark McGowan with our Alliance's letter that requested he remove the Wages Policy within the Budget papers that would be released September 9th at the 'State Budget Lockup'.

I personally was invited and attended the State Budget Lockup, in where my phone was confiscated, and I sat in a room for over 4 hours and provided the opportunity to hear directly from Mark McGowan before going through all the State Budget papers you may have noticed in the image above. It was there I learned that the Government would bring forward the review, begin consultation with public sector unions immediately, with the intent to implement any new wages policy from early 2022. Make no mistake, if it wasn't for the likes of public sector unions and their memberships publicly waging war against the \$1000 wage cap, then there would have been no incentive to bring forward the review more than two years early. **But whilst we have won the first battle, the war is far from over.**

Our Public Sector Alliance have been engaged by representatives from Office of the Premier, the Minister for Industrial Relations, the Department of Treasury and GSLR to participate in a comprehensive consultation process to develop the next Wages Policy. This is our opportunity to have our views heard and attempt to try and influence the Government's decision making process in the lead up to the State Budget Mid-year Review in December this year. The review process and time frame is as follows:

- Wednesday 15 September - Briefing by the Hon Stephen Dawson, MLC Minister for Industrial Relations
- Tuesday 21 September - Presentation on the State Budget and Wages Policy by the Department of Treasury and GSLR
- Friday 24 September - In-person union consultation commences
- Tuesday 5 October - In-person union consultation ends
- Friday 22 October - Closing date for written submissions to Government
- Monday 25 October - Consultation close out meeting by the Hon Stephen Dawson, MLC Minister for Industrial Relations
- Mid-December - State Budget Mid-year Review

I already am, and will continue to be, a part of this review process. Noting that such process has never occurred before. The announcement that Government will end the current State Wages Policy by commencing an early review is welcome, but the devil will be in the detail. I and the other unions of our alliance will fight hard for a pay rise for our members, as it's without doubt, that West Australians need a pay rise!

Public sector unions, including ours, will meet to resolve a joint position on an acceptable outcome from the wages review this Wednesday 22 September. If an acceptable outcome is not achieved from the review, then members must consider if they wish to have a blue in '22.

*"But whilst we have won the first battle, the war is far from over."*

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## POSITION ON MANDATORY VACCINATION

The RTBU asserts that the key to protecting rail, tram, and bus workers from COVID-19 lies in:

- long term testing in the workplace comprising of a range of measures such as Saliva Swab testing, Rapid Antigen Testing, and PCR Surveillance testing;
- a proactive priority vaccination rollout to rail, tram, and bus workers at their workplace for those wishing to be vaccinated;
- incentives from government and employers to promote vaccination of workers.

The RTBU condemns the lack of leadership by the Federal Government in this area, and its failure to ensure all workers in the transport industry can access vaccines.



This failure has led to an urgency in the vaccine rollout that has forced consideration of mandatory vaccination which is an entirely unworkable solution.

The RTBU would like to see optimal vaccination rates for the health and safety of everyone involved in our transport systems.

Recognising that there will be some who may not be able to take the COVID vaccines due to religious or medical reasons or even because they are conscientious objectors.

No worker should be disadvantaged because of the political failures of Government.

## MENTALLY HEALTHY

### What is a mentally healthy workplace?

A mentally healthy workplace is one where workers and management collaborate to protect and promote the health, safety and wellbeing of all. Maintaining a mentally healthy workplace involves continually addressing health, safety and wellbeing concerns in and due to, the work environment. This includes the:

- organisation and design of work
- workplace culture
- physical environment
- facilities provided

Through creating mentally healthy workplaces, organisations can make a valuable contribution to improving the mental health of their workers. We spend a lot of time at work, and it has a significant impact on our lives. Using this part of life to make a positive impact on mental health is a good idea.

### Why is creating a mentally health workplace important?

Preventing harm to mental health and wellbeing is important because:

**It's the law** – workplaces and management have an obligation to prevent harm to the health and safety of workers

**It's the right thing to do** – leaders and managers have a social and corporate responsibility

**It's the smart thing to do** – making mental health a priority in the workplace makes good business sense and helps contribute to a higher performing Western Australian economy.

### What can I do?

The mental wellbeing of people at work is good for everyone and enhances personal and organisational success. Everyone has a role to play, both in looking after their own mental health and creating a mentally healthy workplace.

### What is needed by my employer?

Leadership commitment, as well as supportive and capable management and supervision, are key to the success. Communication and consultation are important at all stages too.



## Mentally healthy workplaces

<http://www.dmp.wa.gov.au/Safety/Resources-for-workers-25123.aspx>