

RT&BU LOCOMOTIVE DIVISION

LOCO LINES

Newsletter for Locomotive Enginemen of the Rail,
Tram & Bus Union - Victoria

EDITION 42 SEPTEMBER 2007

DIVISIONAL EXECUTIVE

DIVISIONAL SECRETARY:

DIVISIONAL PRESIDENT:

DIVISIONAL ASSIST. SECRETARY:

DIVISIONAL VICE PRESIDENT:

Brian Hill 0404 044 183

Terry Sheedy 0417 310 400

Paul Carr 0428 380 902

Darren Lamont 0404 044 789

DIVISIONAL DELEGATES

Passenger Sub-division:

Pacific National (ex Freight) Sub-division:

Metropolitan Sub-division:

Pacific National Sub-division:

Neville Cowie 0408 320 319

Adrian Power 0414 568 205

Jim Chrysostomou 0404 814 141

Richard Orme 0404 814 207

Peter Laux 0417 526 544



Pictured above: The sprinter's new livery that only lasted a day.....

EMAIL ADDRESSES

Any member who wish to have their email address added to their contact details should send their name, member number and email address to: rtbu@iprimus.com.au

LOCO LINES
EDITION 40
FEBRUARY 2007

LOCO LINES is published by the Locomotive Division of the Australian Rail, Tram & Bus Industry Union - Victorian Branch. See the bottom of this page for the Locomotive Division's business address, telephone, e-mail and website details.

LOCO LINES is distributed free to all financial members of the Locomotive Division. Retired Enginemen also receive the magazine for free. It is made available to non-members at a cost of \$20.00 per year.

Advertisements offering a specific benefit to Locomotive Division members are published free of charge. Heritage groups are generally not charged for advertising or tour information.

Views or opinions expressed in published contributions to LOCO LINES are not necessarily those of the Union Office. We also reserve the right to alter or delete text for legal or other purposes. Contributions are printed at the discretion of the publisher.

Loco Lines, or any part thereof, cannot be reproduced or distributed without the written consent of the Victorian Locomotive Division.

Publisher
Brian Hill

Contents

Page	
3.....	Secretary's Report
4.....	Vice President's Report
5.....	Exceed Is Now Accusing
6.....	Nelson's Column
9.....	Capacity - Time To Recycle An Idea
12.....	Letters
14.....	Seymour Reunion
15.....	Steam & Heritage Operations
16.....	Geelong Presentation Day
17.....	Steamrail Pictures
18.....	Signal Sighting Report
20.....	Where Is It?
21.....	Montague Goods Shed
22.....	Shunt Vehicle Inspection
24.....	Radio Shunting Report
25.....	Point Cook Station
26.....	Cab Committee Report
27.....	Level Crossing Upgrade—Active Advance Warning Signs and Rumble Strips

RT&BU-LD Address: Level 14, 222 Kings Way,
South Melbourne Victoria 3205
Tel: 9682 1122 Fax: 9682 3344 Toll Free: 1800 134 095
E-mail: rtbu@iprimus.com.au

RTBU LOCOMOTIVE DIVISION WEBSITE
www.rtbuvicloco.com.au

- ◆ Current and past LOCO LINES editions for download
- ◆ Links to current awards, agreements
- ◆ Union history
- ◆ Divisional Executive
- ◆ Online form for membership application
- ◆ Online feedback and contact details



Divisional Secretary's Report

By Brian Hill

Recent events have again highlighted the deficiencies in Driver training and accreditation in Victoria, and it is becoming even more difficult to convince anyone to take ownership of the problem, not only because of the continued perception with those in authority that there is no standard, but also because of the enormity of the problem. It is easier to allow operators to self regulate on the basis of cost or business needs and to only look at incidents if they happen to get reported. In my opinion those who have the ability to address this issue are sitting on their hands until the next employment opportunity arises, after all why would you create work for yourself with only a short-term contract. The DOI, PTSV must make an effort to address the 'can't do' mentality in this industry.

Members may be aware of the fiasco that occurred in the Geelong grain loop when the third party employee claimed that they trained themselves in and at that location. This resulted in, over a period of four weeks, representation from the locomotive division to the safety regulator and network safety raising safety concerns very similar to those that resulted in a high speed derailment at Benalla. The RTBU LD was accused by all and sundry of an industrial dispute and or a snap strike. What observers failed to disclose was that during the course of events on the day it was agreed by V/Line Management in consultation with the Locomotive Division to suspend the grain service. It was also agreed that the normal process would be applied and that the passenger service be suspended until confirmation was had that no unsafe practice was occurring.

Due to these issues being raised by the Locomotive Division, and because of the inability of anyone to take ownership of the accreditation process, a dozen V/Line drivers from Geelong and Melbourne have had their wages withheld for being involved in industrial action.

More recent incidents have occurred at Westall maintenance facility where an operator was given access without being conversant, and Seymour locomotive depot that saw the illegal movement of locomotives. A new operator of the EM100 was granted access to the network which allowed it to run at 100kph amongst passenger services without even knowing what credentials they had, but as stated by V/Line Rural Network and Access (RN&A), that's alright because they operate similar machines in NSW. When it was asked if they met the medical standard required the V/Line safety area response was "I would have to check".

RN&A are of the belief they are not required to ask for the qualifications or are not in the position to check the accreditation of any rail operator that applies for access to the Victorian rail Network who are an accredited

operator. RN&A could take some comfort in the fact that we cannot *accredit* all the problems to their safety management system as it has become very evident that the office of the Director Public Transport Safety (Regulator) and the Public Transport Safety Victoria have no more clear understanding of their function in this thing called accreditation and Driver standards and the minimum requirement to operate a train in this state then RN&A.

Accreditation (noun):

To officially recognize a person or organisation as having met a standard or criterion and/or to give somebody or an organisation the authority to perform a function

The following are terms of reference from the Department Of Infrastructure web site.

Public transport safety works with industry to develop and maintain the highest standards of safety possible for train, tram and bus services in Victoria.

"The Safety Director's key concern is to ensure that accredited rail operators are able to manage the risks to safety associated with their rail operations. Ultimately, accreditation is designed to promote safe operation of rail services in Victoria.

*The purpose of accreditation is to attest that a rail operator has demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Safety Director that the rail operator has the **competence and capacity to manage the risk to safety** associated with the rail operations for which accreditation were sought."*

An applicant when applying for accreditation will need to attach documentary evidence of:

The competency and capacity to carry out the rail operations safely, including details of key safety personnel

Consultation regarding the preparation of an safety management system (SMS) with rail workers, employees who are health and safety representatives and any person who they may have an interface coordination plan (ICP) with

The Capacity to meet potential accident liabilities

And Identify risks that require safety interfaces

And details of rights of access

That line my predecessor used occasionally comes to mind "what do I know, I'm only a dumb train Driver" but it is pretty obvious to me on reading both the Rail Safety Act and Regulations and the V/Line Access Agreement, which is backstopped by the Emergency Services Act all of which make a reference to the Occupational Health & Safety Act that all are falling well short of their duty of care and it is very clear who should have their wages withheld.

Due to the more consistent braking performance of the Siemens train the work group have agreed it is now appropriate to upgrade the current risk mitigations to accommodate the improved brake performance. This will result in the removal of 40kph speed restriction on approach to platforms, the removal of temporary speed restrictions approaching junctions and low speed curves. Six (6) car operations of Siemens trains will remain in force until further notice as will the Level crossing Express / Stopper function this will be monitored and reviewed if necessary.



Divisional Vice President's Report

By **Darren Lamont**

So where did the benefits of a standard gauge track to Geelong go?

Sometime in 1991 Geelong was upset that the Booze-Allen&Hamilton report entitled eastern rail network study-National Rail Freight Initiative recommended that the establishment of a Victorian standard gauge link from Melbourne to Adelaide as an alternative to the existing Broken Hill route would be via Ballarat and not Geelong. Geelong's interest groups were upset and decided to put forward ideas that the Federal Government would have to listen too.

I decided to get involved and wrote letters, lobbied Politicians, Federal and State, and pestered Union officials to the extent that the then A.F.U.L.E President MR P Thomson who also lived in Geelong, and I eventually attended a few meetings and made phone calls to assist a submission for the Port of Geelong Authority.

The Port of Geelong's submission was based around what the possibilities of the standard gauge would have for Geelong and counteract arguments used by the Booze-Allen&Hamilton study which recommended the Melbourne-Ballarat as the preferred route. Some of our information was well selected points from the infamous Lonie Report.

Our input was minimal, but Thomo gave them a view of what could happen—a container terminal and also the Wimmera sands project.

The carrot that there might be a great Wimmera Mineral sands project to be grabbed and interstate grain.

Axle load ratios and the road versus rail document which was put out by the Union and of course our favourite, the scare tactic keep as many trucks off the road as possible.

The Harmon fuel saving device was used as an argument to overcome the extra distance fuel expense, yes I know! But no one understood that you could turn locomotives off line or start them up somewhere along the track,

So a device to save fuel sounded better! Even if the device was never successful.

As we all know now, the gauge came to Geelong, or as I like to say the gauge goes through Geelong!

So where did it all go wrong? Where are the benefits of the Holy gauge? Everyone thought Geelong's future was secure.

In no particular order freight from Fords, Fyansford Cement, Pivot Phosphate, IXL Wool, Freightgate, Fastrack, livestock, briquettes, and many others have gone forever.

If it was Legislation changes for trucks carrying dangerous goods i.e. L.P.G. or local councils relenting on B double designated route policy, the overwhelming power of the trucking companies, and their Union, together with tax rebates for private owner drivers, and their hunger for all work has decimated short to medium distance rail haulage.

Before we fast forward, does anybody remember the messiah for privatisation and for the great rail freight company in Victoria that was going to take on all comers around Australia and made special trips to each depot promising a golden future!

Where are you now Marinus? Or better still, what did you leave behind? After a quick Google I found him in South Africa after an exhausting holiday in Europe, now in charge of rail freight in South Africa.

2007

Pacific National and its division culture, that is Geelong is an Industrial Products Division, therefore does not cart wheat etc, leaves Geelong in a very sensitive situation.

Not having a drought would help but, as we all know, and especially Geelong Engineman "painting rocks I think we did one year" droughts are always going to be part of our land.

The nearest container terminal is S.C.T. and the Wimmera sands project is long forgotten.

Recent years have seen dual gauge into the grain loop and now as we speak the G.R.A.I.P. project version 2, which involves a track built from the grain loop line to North Shore yard involving standard gauge tracks at Nth Shore and into the woodchip mill.

Version 1 by the way, was to run the gauge across the broad into North Shore. Not a good idea to try and get across one of the busiest passenger networks in the state unless you wish to run trains across between the hours of 0100 to

0330. The end result is what is left to cart!
All the self interested parties have not fulfilled their commitments to utilise the gauge, and that, to be a little fair, has not been helped by a lack of spending until now by all governments, especially past Liberal State and the current Federal Liberal government.

Hopefully a Federal Labor Government might listen to the Geelong business lobby groups, but they also lobbied for the gauge and did nothing with it!

While the gauge goes through Geelong it is one way of loosing the term sleepy hollow, but unless business groups or Pacific National try harder to obtain more work that's exactly what Geelong yard will look like!

To bring all members up to speed, the Division have attended 3 Sunday meetings with members of Geelong Freight with reasonable to good attendances, and at least 4 meetings with Pacific National Industrial Products.

The initial proposal for Geelong Pacific Industrial products consisted of the following:

- * Reduction in pilot working
- * Remote sign- ons
- * Transferring crewing of the Warrnambool to General freight for economic reasons cost savings of one full crew
- * Geelong to rest at Bairnsdale and Wodonga

* Changing times for transferring loading i.e. Tottenham yard to Geelong and or return Loading

* Removal of Y Class locos, shunting with mainline locos

* Fuelling locos in the yard to save E.D.I.costs

* Reduction of 5 Foes and 7 Drivers.

Now Pacific National's view is all hands on deck because of realisation that they might not have enough of crews to run the wheat.

While the Locomotive Division is in constant contact with the Operations Division, it is not in the best interests to have a demarcation dispute over second person versus foes duties. This would only suit P.N. Industrial products.

Six Drivers have successfully obtained employment at Connex and the Division wishes them well, but our main focus concerning Geelong, is to look after the Drivers who are still there and try to secure a future for them!

With no long term contracts beyond 2009 Geelong Freight is at the crossroads now.

The Locomotive Division has a responsibility to all members, but at times some Depots are more in need than others.

This article is a brief history and an update to raise the question on how did it all go wrong when Geelong had secured the standard gauge into or through whichever you prefer.

Exceed Is Now Accusing

By Terry Sheedy
Divisional President

In volume 24 of Connexions, we the Drivers, are accused of spreading lies and misinformation about the Exceed program, glad to know that they read 'Loco Lines' for the true facts.

The accusations are made by Connex's spin doctors, you know the ones that tell the porkies to the media and public when trains run late or are cancelled.

The fact is that you did have to pay for postage and handling on your exceed points purchased until the union raised it with management.

The Exceed program was introduced to divide the workforce into different rankings, company

people, union people and cheating people who see some gain for no cost.

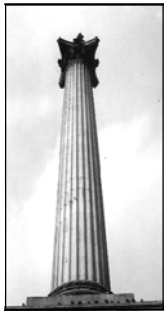
Rob McMurray wrote his article from discussions he had with drivers on the job who work by themselves, do their job, and don't look for 'twinkle twinkle little stars' if they did something out of the ordinary to assist the passengers and then go home.

Many members have told me how embarrassed they were to receive a packet of jaffas in the mail. Will it be plasticine and crayons next?

I know a few who put 'Return To Sender' on the box, and yours truly was one.

I was then set up by management who tried to present me with an Exceed award for 'Respect' on Thursday 19th July.

I declined the offer from Tony Villani and informed him I am on the hunt for those who made the nomination, and if he is one, I will have lost my respect for him



NELSON'S COLUMN.

with Ernie Nelson
Vice President
Metropolitan Sub-Division

Exceed My Arse.

The recent article published by Connex in their Trash Maggo *Connexions*, in this article Program Manager Christina Francis and Program Administrator Shannon Ralph seem to point the finger at Myself, Terry Sheedy, and Robin McMurray as **Lying** and creating **Mischief** to try and divert Members from the truth of the matter. The way I see the Exceed Program is that it was created as a means to pursue the following targeted outcomes in my opinion;

- * Connex Melbourne, by offering bribes to Members, to employ backhanded methods to subvert the Union Collective Agreement and its attached Rights and Conditions that the Rail Tram and Bus Union fought hard to secure.
- * To make our Members believe that the Company does have your interest at heart and you really don't need to be in a Union.
- * To constantly implore Staff to ignore Health and Safety issues in exchange for trinkets for making the system run and then feign indignation when confronted with a Provisional Improvement Notice.
- * The program originally required the recipient

pay Post and Handling for the trinket selected as happened to our Member at an Out-Station Drivers Depot, this has now been stopped since it was discovered by the Metropolitan Sub-Divisional Office and raised with Connex.

- * The overall concept of the "Program" would appear in my opinion to be weighted in favour of Management Grades and does not seem to do much for us grunt Train Drivers, Signallers and Station Hacks.
- * This type of program has been tried in the past and was a failure then as well.

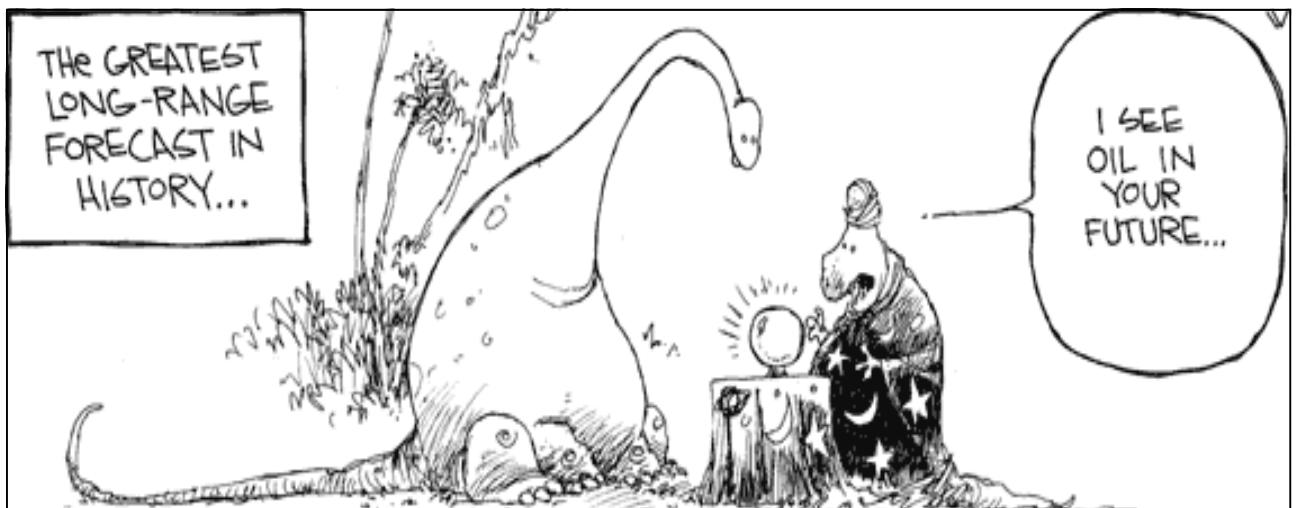
Rumours Of My Demise Are Exaggerated.

Just to let members know that the rumour that I have spat the dummy and quit the Union Executive is just crap.

I have been in the office full time since August 1999 and before that relieving off and on since 1995 in various positions from OHS to Secretary and back, and as a result I will be going back to Westall for a break from all the crap.

However I will be providing holiday relief for Jim and Richard, so no doubt you will see me back in Room 112 Flinders Street Station from time to time, and as I am still the Metropolitan Sub-Divisional Vice President, I will no doubt have other duties to carry out as well, and I may even return to full time in the new year if required by the Secretary.

I will always be available to members to assist with your questions or problems.



Ansett and Rail Operator Combine Resources

This is extracts of a strange story of the collision of Ansett Airways Douglas DC-3 and a NSW Railways coal train at Kingsford Smith Airport, Mascot, on Sunday 18 June 1950. Much detail has been omitted for the sake of brevity. The basics are as follows - At approximately 2000 hours on 18 June, 1950, Ansett Airways' DC-3 taxied into a train consisting of a D50 locomotive, 53 empty

coal-wagons & 1 brake-van on Runway 22 at Kingsford Smith Airport, Sydney. The DC-3 was extensively damaged and five of the empty coal wagons were derailed with the only injuries being sustained to the DC-3's First Officer were minor.

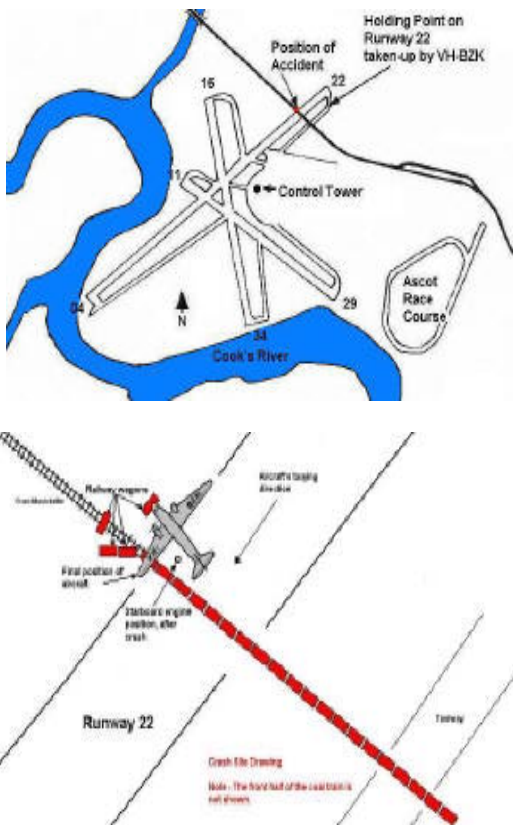
The following drawings show the layout of the runways, the rail line and the approximate position of the collision and crash site details

There were 3 runways available for use that night – runway 11/29 (1085m/3580ft long), runway 16/34 (1190m/3950ft long) and runway 04/22 (1787m/5900ft long). These are shown in the 1st drawing, above.

The photo below shows the view from the loco at about that time, looking east towards Runway 22 and puts a new spin on 'ensure you read the fine print' in the special safety control..

Some 150m from the northern end of Runway 04/22 ran the Sydenham to Botany rail line which was supposedly protected by *special safety controls*. A north-east extension of Runway 04/22 had been opened on 22 October 1945 and extended over the rail line it would be curious to know how many near misses there were in that 5 year period. The *special controls* consisted of a signalling system to allow the train Firemen to communicate with the Mascot Rail Goods Office and Control Office & through them seek instructions from the Airport Control Tower to cross the runway. The control tower had facilities to instruct trains whether the rail line was 'clear' or 'obstructed'.

At approximately 1916 hours the DC-3 arrived at Kingsford Smith Airport Runway 16, from an Essendon, Wagga-Wagga, Sydney flight. By 1943 hours traffic saw the Control Tower decide to use



Runway 11 instead of Runway 16 and from then until the accident, all take-offs & landings were made on Runway 11. The DC-3 readying for a flight to Coffs Harbour and Brisbane, with the same crew of 3 carrying 15 passengers called the control tower at 1945. The Controller, in a later statement claimed, that he cleared the aircraft to use Runway 11 (his assistant stated that he confirmed that clearance). The Controller then turned his attention to another aircraft and did not keep track of the DC-3. However the Captain gave evidence during the investigation that he was instructed to use Runway 22 rather than Runway 11 and had proceeded along the apron/taxiway adjacent to Runway 22 crossing the rail line without lighting or any problems.

At approximately 1955 hours, the signalman in the Mascot Goods Yard instigated the special controls by phoning the control tower to seek permission for an empty coal train, from the Bunnerong Power Station to cross the runway. The permission was given for the train to proceed. Three minutes later at 1958 the Controller called the DC-3 and advised that he was cleared for take-off believing that they were at the end of Runway 11. The Captain acknowledged "ready for take-off". The pilot gave evidence that he noticed that there are no runway lights and further stated that after commencing taxiing he noticed the lights on Runway 16.

The Control Tower again contacted the aircraft & asked their intentions, the Captain advised that they proposed to take-off on time at 2000 and according to the Captain's evidence to the subsequent inquiry further advised "I am sitting at the end of Runway Two-Two because I am under the belief that we were instructed to use Runway Two-Two?. As the lights on Runway are not on do you wish us to use Two-Two, or One-Six?" The Control Tower replied 'now I am muddled it is not One-Six it is now One-One?'. The Captain then advised that he queried "am I clear to taxi down Runway Two-Two for a Runway One-One holding position?" The Control Tower gave clearance down Runway Two-Two to One-One turned on the lights. The Captain advised the inquiry that they cleared down the runway and took up a holding position he then put on his headlights and proceeded to taxi onto Runway two-two.

After lining-up on the runway and confirming it was clear he switched off the headlights (because of the rain reflecting the glare in the darkness) and proceeded to taxi down Runway 22 at some 10-

13km/h (some later witness reports suggested that it was considerably faster).

After travelling some distance the First Officer shouted "Hold it!" at the same moment the Captain stated he saw a dark object just in front of the aircraft and immediately applied brakes.

The DC-3 then hit something, which was revealed later to be the 25th wagon of the train, on its starboard side which caused it to slew sideways for several seconds.

The Captain immediately turned off the fuel supply as luck would have just before the port engine burst into flames which was quickly extinguished. The emergency hatch was opened the crash scene realised. Considering the empty wagons were estimated to weigh some 450 tonnes and the possible results of such a collision, it is remarkable that only the First Officer received any injury, a slight lacerations to his face.

The aircraft was nowhere near as lucky with damage to the engines, the port wing, the port tail assembly and the lower fuselage in the cockpit area. It was later repaired at a cost of £16500. The 25th coal wagon did not roll over, but derailed and ended up under the aircraft's port wing.

Space does not permit detailing the various claims and counter-claims of the parties involved which raised the issue of how the Control Tower recording system had run out of tape therefore no recording of the conversations was able to be used for the investigation, however there was considerable discussion on the matter and legal opinion of the time suggested that the Tower Controller would have been considered negligent haven already given approval for the train to cross the runway.

In an out of court settlement, the Federal Government compensated Ansett Airways with £27000 for damage to the aircraft and to cover the cost of leasing another DC-3.

The Railways were compensated £485 as a result of the accident. It is interesting that at the time industry wags came up with the axiom *don't miss your train connection, fly Ansett Airways*, interesting because of the amount of ex Ansett staff employed by the rail industry at the moment.

On 10 December 1951, four aircraft traffic lights were installed, to help prevent a repeat of the accident and yes as happens in this industry 10 years later in March 1960 the rail line was moved some 200m north **outside the airport boundary fence**.

CAPACITY:- TIME TO RECYCLE AN IDEA?

By David Campbell

It is now becoming clear to everybody (including for a change the media) that the suburban rail network has effectively reached capacity. The combination of population increases, rising petrol prices, environmental concerns becoming widespread, workers insecurity due to repressive federal industrial laws, probably other reasons, all have contributed to severe overcrowding on most suburban trains.

Peak hour trains on almost all lines are so overcrowded that trains are regularly delayed as scores of people try to get aboard when there really is no space left. And that's still over half an hour out from Melbourne, pity help those closer in! We seem to have at least a couple of ill passengers daily, with the sheer volume of humanity straining air conditioners beyond what they were designed for, again symptomatic of overcrowding.

Most trips on the Northern and Clifton Hill groups try to operate with 3 car trains between peaks and after evening peak, but these trains too are being constantly delayed by heavy crowds of passengers complaining (with some justification) about Connex only providing 3 cars, with passengers forced to squeeze in somehow. Of course, Connex is rather caught in a bind; if they cannot run at least some 3 car trains they cannot release units to go through maintenance, which in turn leads to more faulty trains.....the downward spiral continues.

Running 6 car trains until at least 2100 hrs across the network would alleviate overcrowding for some of the day, but the dire situation during the peaks remains. The requirement for getting these between-peak trains running as 6 cars has a relatively simple fix; we just need a few extra trains.

The issue really is, how do we carry more passengers at peak times?

I would argue that there are two possible answers; either increase capacity of the network (extra tracks, signals, etc), or increase the capacity of the trains. It is of course quite possible to do both, and the beauty of this is that neither answer precludes the other.

INCREASE NETWORK CAPACITY

The last increases to network capacity were the third track Caulfield to Moorabbin during the 1980's, the quadruplication South Kensington to Footscray during the 1970's, and the third track Hawthorn to Box Hill during the 1960's. Other projects either opened new lines for suburban trains (Werribee, Cranbourne) or gave other options for passengers or made operations easier (underground loops).

Network capacity is already the subject of some debate, with reports that the Government is looking at a third track Caulfield – Dandenong and Footscray – Sunshine. Both projects would enable huge improvements to both capacity and running times on these corridors, with extra benefits for Regional trains as well (yes, these are also overcrowded). Other projects are in the pipeline.

It is possible to tinker with the signalling to give closer headways. Some work can occur within current constraints, other works might be possible if we make substantial changes to signal systems (e.g., 5 aspect signalling).

Of course, all of these things really only address problems with the existing network; the chronic need to extend electrification to places such as Wallan, Sunbury, Melton, Mornington and Geelong, and perhaps reopen lines to South Morang and Coldstream cannot even get a look in. Still, before we can contemplate extension of the network, we must surely fix the well known problems with the existing network.

INCREASE CAPACITY OF TRAINS

The simplest way to do this is to run 9-car trains. Although technically possible, it is operationally impractical, as many platforms cannot readily be extended, the underground loop stations are a particular example. Driver only operations would become impractical due to train length, ultimately what should seem to be simple is actually probably the most difficult option.

Another way to do this is to fit more people per train length. We did this once, with the old Tait trains. They ran in consists up to 8 cars, with seating of 80 (motors) and 90 (trailers), giving 680 seats per train. Another 50 people could stand in each car, giving a train capacity of around 1000, which is a little more than the current 6 car trains, although more people could at least sit.

There are arguments in favour of reducing the seating capacity of trains to increase the standing areas, thus increasing the nett capacity of the train. The idea is to install seating longitudinally along the side walls of carriages only, thus leaving seats for quieter trains (whenever they are), and some token seating for heavier trains, presumably for the elderly, pregnant, or selfish. Whether passengers would accept having no choice but to stand for an hour or more might be another thing!

Another way could be to run 6 car trains with only the end carriages having driver cabs. This could increase train capacity by around 20 per train, but would be difficult for operations and a real problem for maintenance workshops designed around 3 car units with cab at each end. Another way could be to build double-deck trains. This would increase capacity per train by around 60%. And this, I argue, is the best way to proceed. We proved once before in Melbourne that double deck trains are feasible, and as multiple problems are occurring simultaneously, this would be the only solution that provides multiple answers.

MELBOURNE'S DOUBLE DECK HISTORY

Is actually rather short. A modified NSW Tangara train was introduced in 1991, and ran for several years after that. It was a one-off, and suffered from that fact alone.

It was well regarded by many of its regular drivers, but in later years became prone to electronic problems which became progressively harder to fix. Its very uniqueness was what finally killed it off, but we can use our experience with it to plan for widespread introduction.

The train ran unrestricted on the Ringwood corridor (Belgrave/Lilydale lines). It could also run to/from Newport Workshops.

Less well known were its runs along the Pakenham line, when it ran high speed trials to Bunyip. It was able to run via certain routes to Pakenham, which demonstrates that it is possible to operate along this corridor without major changes to infrastructure. It would follow that the Cranbourne and Frankston lines should also be achievable without too much difficulty.

The same would apply to Newport – Werribee. In fact, many of the changes to infrastructure that would have been needed to enable double

deck trains had to be done when the Siemens trains were introduced, with their clearance problems.

So then, with little work, these trains could operate on the Lilydale, Belgrave, Pakenham, Cranbourne, Frankston and Werribee lines. These are each particularly busy lines, with services and track both running at or beyond nominal capacity.

The major clearance issue remaining would probably be the horribly low Swanston Street bridge at Flinders Street, but this should be capable of track lowering as we did in tracks 1/1A/2 some years ago when the double deck train was first introduced. Given that the train ran unrestricted into platforms 3 and 4, it may not be necessary to lower the other tracks anyway.

The late Mike Ronald (former Chief Traffic Manager of the V.R.) commented to me years ago that his biggest concern with double deck trains was the risk to passengers if a truck collided with the side of a train at a level crossing.

This will be a concern with any train (refer Kerang), but since his comment all level crossings in the metro area have been fitted with the more effective boom barriers, and indeed several crossings have been actually eliminated. This Union's policy of not accepting any new level crossings can be seen to actually benefit the introduction of such trains.

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

The very idea of introducing double deck trains could well get no further than being the subject of "nice to have" discussions, except that we are now in an unusually fortuitous situation with multiple issues arising simultaneously. And the double deck train actually meets or exceeds the challenges.

Infrastructure: whether or not money is spent on the existing track/signals, the double deck train can increase network capacity by accommodating more passengers per train. It would actually be possible to avoid spending money on network improvements, using it instead to buy new trains.

Fleet Issues: I didn't mention this before. The fact is that we are overdue for a fleet of new trains. The Hitachi trains should have been removed from the network 18 months ago, instead of which they are raiding museums to try

to get more back into running. The Comeng trains, while comfortable for passengers, are a maintenance nightmare, reflecting technologies that were obsolete even before the trains were built.

Let's not forget, these train are over 25 years old, and are effectively overdue for either a half-life rebuild or outright replacement.

By the time that either new trains are built or the existing ones are refurbished, the trains will be over 30 years old. We are not talking here about building trains for new services (overdue as they are), but simply to maintain the existing services.

There are suggestions that, by the time we get around to building a fleet of new trains to replace the Hitachi and coming, the newer X'trapolis and Siemens trains will both be just about due for rebuild / replacement.

The point is that we need to build a fleet of new trains anyway. With long lead times for trains to be built, we have an opportunity to really get it right.

Over the next few years while the trains are being built, we have the time to fix the clearances so that the train will have the best chance to fit throughout the majority of the network.

There was a project of sorts some years ago, under the banner of "10 foot wide cars", but this really only tweaked things and seemed to leave as many problems as it fixed.

The clearances from older structures such as

bridges, signals and overhead wiring masts remain an issue.

This should really be fixed quite apart from new trains (or any other project, for that matter).

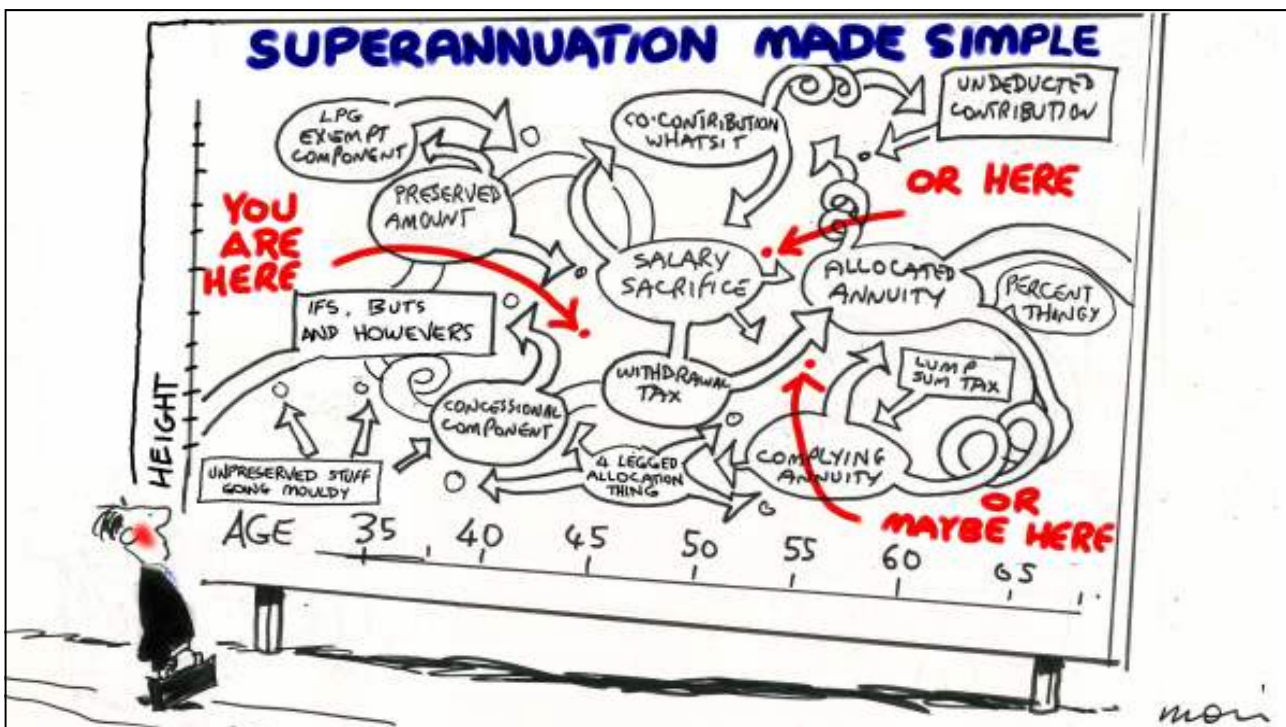
The funny thing is that by simply building double deck trains, we would by-pass the immediate need for spending on other infrastructure capacity projects. Given that we would need to spend on new trains in any case, it becomes more and more likely that by purchasing double-deck trains, we could well achieve net savings on the rail budget. And these savings could be used to extend the network.

We could well manage to both extend the network and increase capacity, for the same cost as we would incur by building more trains and trying to improve the existing, antiquated infrastructure.

The concept of double deck trains is hardly new. New South Wales has had them since 1964, and their entire suburban E.M.U. fleet is now double deck.

Many overseas cities use double deck vehicles, and Alstom actually offers double deck as one of the configurations of their X'trapolis train (although something would have to be done to fix the rough Victorian track or improve the suspension, imagine the ride on the top deck!)

Food for thought...



LETTERS

To the Divisional Secretary
PTULD

As I will officially retire on 7/7/2007, I wish to submit my resignation to the PTULD. I have enjoyed my career as an Engineman at Bendigo for the past 45 years and also as a representative of the members of the Northern District as Councillor for 22 years.

I was privileged to have worked with two great Federal Officers of the Union with Ron Bradford as General President and the late Glen Moorehead as General Secretary, who were responsible for introducing many reforms to the Union during that time.

There have been many changes introduced over the years, both in the structure of the Union and in work reforms.

It was satisfying to be part of the decision making process being involved with probably two of the biggest initiatives undertaken by the Union, with the introduction of DOO and the implementation of the aggregate wage within V/Line.

My involvement with both these projects enabled me to visit every Branch in the State and to meet with Branch Officers and members at all locations.

I would also like to express my appreciation to all Divisional Officers and Councillors, past and present, where I enjoyed a good working relationship, in particular with experienced Divisional Secretaries such as the late Steve Gibson, Paul Carr and Marc Marotta, who all contributed significantly to the Union and its membership with little recognition for their efforts.

I would also like to thank all the members of the Bendigo Branch and outstations who supported me during my 33 years as Branch Secretary at Bendigo and I wish the Union and its members all the best for the future. I will try to think of you occasionally as I enjoy my retirement in Queensland.

Regards
Kevin Ellis

Dear Brian,

I wish to inform you that I am retiring from Connex on the 28th September 2007, and need to tender my resignation from the A.F.U.L.E.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the union for its assistance over the years and to all my colleagues and friends on the job, than you for making this a great job.

I wish the union and everyone all the best and good luck for the future.

Allan Colville
Driver E.R.D.

Richard Gilbert Retirement

With much regret I tender my Resignation from the PTULD as I have retired from Connex and from work as an electric train driver.

My railway career has been one of great enjoyment spanning 40 years with 31 of those being spent in the Loco section. In that area I have had a great time, worked with wonderful people and enjoyed the comradeship and opportunities that can be gained by involving oneself in the union affairs as much as being out there as a rank and file member.

In looking back and seeing where we are now, I see the great strides forward we have made and I remember those who have taught us of times past and guided us on the continuing course of protecting and promoting our position in the industry.

I started at South Dynon Loco Depot and followed along on the Goods Roster to eventually become Commissioners Fireman with great mates to work with along the way such as Anton Candir, Stuart Lodington, Bill Steedman and those gentry one got to work with when on the "big wheel" roster just prior to going for Driving. Then it was over to Jolimont, as it was in those days, where Bob Blackford guided us through the electric train drivers class and then out onto the road for 27 years enjoying Tait trains, the Harris trains, the 'silvers' and so on.

But it has been an industry seeing great changes in those 40 years and like all things in the world around us, it had to change to stay relevant. But within those changes are many challenges and the unity of those representing the Union and those members, being the Union, must keep the cause foremost in their view as the challenges are thrown at us.

We have won wage and working conditions the envy of many, but these are always under attack from outside. The Kennett years provided a recent taste of right wing attack, which truly challenged the industry, but we are still here and Kennett isn't. That's what it's about. UNITY. Don't fall into the delusion that it's an old trade union call. It's as relevant today as it was in the 20's, 30's, 50's and 60's and even today, when governments try to sell the message of trade unions are running the country as evil.

Who wants Workchoices. When white-collar workers are complaining of working 50 hours per week, we still have an Award giving us 38 hours per week and rostered time away. Who's better off.

I look back to when I was on the Divisional Council of the Union and saw and understood many issues faced by our grade that seemed daunting but we won through. Great men were our mentors such as Glenn Moorhead, Ron Bradford and Steve Gibson. Just as our Union has produced a Prime Minister and other members of Federal and State Parliament, those leaders quoted above gave us direction and have produced a new generation of leaders to carry on. Marc Marotta has truly guided us forward in very trying times and now the current team of Brian Hill, Paul Carr, Terry Sheedy and Darren Lamont are a capable group. But it needs the untiring support of the members to maintain that unity

which keeps the entire union effort cohesive.

Thanks to all for your friendship and working alliance, which has left me with great memories of a great job.

I'm proud to have been a railwayman and to have been part of the history that has made the Victorian Railways and its successors what it is.

Now I have my 'country house' at Clunes, a former D.R near the station, I enjoy seeing the trains rolling by, with a wave from the crews, some who know me, and I equally enjoy tending the growing grape vines in the paddock on the other side of town from where the growl of the 'G' and 'X' class can be heard across the valley. I don't mind a toot on night shift too.

I still have the house at Mordialloc and will be seen in the suburbs for some time as well. I wish all the younger Drivers well, at the various railway systems, and it's your job now to look after and to protect. A lot of people over the past have made it what it is.

Thanks to all those who came along to the farewell drinks on my last day, and I'm certainly not put out to pasture in retirement. There's a lot of life to be lived and I'll be doing that.

P.S: The black book's still active!

Pictured Below: Richard Gilbert with Robert Hosie (left) at Richard's farewell event at the Duke of Kent Hotel.



REUNION
SEYMOUR CRICKET CLUB ROOMS
CHITTICK PARK
SUNDAY
14TH OCTOBER
11:00 to 17:00

If you ever worked at Seymour, Shepparton, Benalla or Wodonga Loco Depots, you are invited to enjoy a pleasant Sunday afternoon renewing old friendships and reminiscing about old times on the foot plate.

The beer will be cold and a barbecue lunch will be provided.
\$10 per head or \$5 if retired.

Could you please return the attached form with your payment to:

Graham Thompson
30 Redbank Rd
Seymour. 3660

Or contact:

Graham Thompson
57922579
0409132963

John Gaehl
57922636
0412306900

Peter Gribben
93102202
0417368178

I, _____ will be attending the reunion on Sunday 14th October.

Please find enclosed \$ _____

I am Retired/Employed (Please Circle)

Please notify of your attendance by the 7th October.

Steam & Heritage Operations

By Mark Rollinson
Heritage Roster Co ordinator

A veteran of steam operations informed me quite seriously “Steam business is show business”, we’re not running a steam service but entertaining and informing Mr. & Mrs. Joe Average. After 15 to 18 months of steam & heritage rostering, I absolutely agree.

The feedback over the last year from heritage operators, steam societies and many other community festival operators is that if the steam train is on site or in the vicinity, it’s a winner.

On that note, I can report on busy previous 12 months and brag that membership and enrolment for both steam and diesel heritage operations gets bigger and more popular with the state membership across the board. With restrictions still in force with the operation of Suburban electric (and the L class loco also) little work has progressed for most Connex drivers.

One of the reasons why it’s getting to be popular is that no matter from which company you belong as a full time employee, your contribution to this organization is welcomed and appreciated, coincidentally, I reckon another reason is because over the past 24 to 30 months we have trained (1) 5 new firemen with three more due to complete shortly, (2) 4 new steam drivers, (3) 1 Connex driver re-qualified as a diesel second person (for steam firing needs) and propose to extend training well into the next financial year and beyond.

In spite of all this good news, I have to report on a few grizzles ‘in the camp.’ Current qualified steam firemen have pointed out to me that it’s been a lean season for them as training duties on all rostered jobs has been a priority.

It is anticipated during the next 12 months we will see up to four qualified steam firemen commence their study and on job training to the position of steam driver. More work to go around for the qualified steam firemen!!!

While still talking about the increasing involvement in steam and diesel heritage, I would like to welcome all new signed up members. It’s becoming a pretty broad church, for example; RTP’s Laurie Reynolds and Connex’s Fred

Capuano, not to forget the many others that have kept their hand in and we wish to welcome El Zorro’s Ray Evans’ expression of interest to join also.

The railway industry landscape changes almost every day with Pacific National surrendering its lease of the country track network back to the Victorian State Government, operated by V/Line. Perhaps, this will open the opportunity to increase heritage operations to further primary and secondary corridors? With the bulk of the grain harvest now being consigned to the road network, maybe some heritage excursion trips might be possible over tracks we’ve previously been excluded from?

The logistics of getting steam/heritage operations out over the network gets more complicated every year. Limitation to the speed over corridors by rolling stock is the obvious first issue. But other issues relating to the legal liability, conversancy issues, track and safeworking issues, track work occupations, notwithstanding other stakeholders like WorkSafe, D.O.I., C.F.A. and local council limitations make each rostered trip a one off event. However, we seem to get over any hurdle that is presented, and the goodwill from the public seem to ensure the popularity of these trains.

Highlights of the last 12 months are numerous and I’ll briefly list them as: Seymour’s Blue Train to both Bairnsdale and Warrnambool, the Tocumwal and St Arnaud trips by Steamrail Victoria, the 150th anniversary train operations at Geelong, and just recently, the Hurstbridge Wattle Festival have all demanded significant commitment from heritage stakeholders, drivers, firemen, instructors, etc.

With all this in mind, I wonder why the franchises’ don’t try to maximize the goodwill that heritage operations generate to off-set the patchy at best marketing and promotion of their service by endorsement and sponsorship with various registered organizations? It can’t be bad to market a few smiling faces as well the ‘nanny campaigns’ of ticketing and law & order, and public safety. Come on franchises, “Get on board!!!”

The steam and heritage committee will continue to work with all parties to meet the safe train running issues that various operators and stakeholders’ require. We also look forward to

further state government findings to support the training demands for the next generation of steam and heritage drivers.

HERITAGE COMMITTEE CHANGES

Over the last seven years the workload has progressively increased to such an extent that late 2006 saw the arrangement of the Crewing Coordinators role split up with Administration duties going to the Heritage Coordinator and the introduction of the Training Coordinator, held by Michael Welch. This position arranges the needs for all training rostering and courseware issues.

ANOTHER GROUP ENTERS THE MAINLINE

During May V/Line approached us for input regarding the reintroduction of D.E.R.M.'s back into service, by the D.E.R.M. Preservation Association of Victoria (DERMPAV).

Fruitful discussions have ensued with the safety and operational needs being addressed to see this equipment operate in a modern day environment whilst keeping its distinctive character. Several unsigned DERM qualified drivers have been

approached and signed up since. In addition the Locomotive Division has arranged for work to commence in developing Nationally accredited courseware (which is well underway) with Checklists and Computer Based Exams being undertaken by RTI and Ballarat Driver Alan Moriarty.

Cab Committee discussions have begun with a qualified driver arranged to attend with the Heritage Cab Committee Representative to soon work through with DERMPAV and V/Line any driver, safety and operational issues that may arise.

In closing, I wish to extend special thanks to all Heritage members for their huge contributions, with special thanks to Ross Gorman, Bob Lawrence, Lindsay Walker, Don Armstrong, Graeme Cleak (V/line), V/Line Safety Office, Staff at Spencer Street, Ken Dunning, Terry Hughes, and Heather Williamson.

Mark Rollinson
Steam and Heritage Operations
Crewing Coordinator

Geelong Locomotive Depot

Presentation Day

Where: Geelong V.R.I. Hall

When: 21st October 2007

Time: From 14:00 hours

Cost: Current Drivers - \$20.00

Retired Drivers - Donation

All pictures on this page have been reproduced courtesy of Steamrail News.



K153 leads the Hurstbridge Wattle Festival charter train towards Hurstbridge.
Picture: James Hansen



On the west end of the same train, K190 heads back to Diamond Creek.
Picture: Nick Archer



R761 being prepared for the road at Newport on 21st July for the Mystery Dinner Special.
Picture: James Hansen

Signal Sighting Report

By David Campbell
Signal Sighting Metro

CRAIGIEBURN ELECTRIFICATION

By the time you read this, most suburban drivers will have driven or at least been trained on this track. Craigieburn was a double line block post until the early 1980's, after which all points and signals were removed. Obviously that system could not be expected to cope with frequent suburban traffic, so a new signalling system was installed during June this year. Somerton and Broadmeadows signalboxes have been abolished, with all moves controlled by the signaller at Craigieburn. A new station has been built to serve Roxburgh Park; this is located a little to the north of the old Somerton platform (now, that will sort out the old-timers!!)

Some stabling sidings have been built at Craigieburn, they are located between the old Hume Highway overline bridge and the new Hume Freeway underline bridge. Signal sighting works started in 2004, with planning meetings and site inspections involving representatives of V/Line Pass, former Freight Australia, former National Rail, and of course metro.

Just before the job went out to construct, the "toecutters" intervened, and drastically reduced what had been planned for at Craigieburn. The original proposals included three platforms at Craigieburn, with 65 km/h crossovers, allowing an arriving spark to be on one platform while a Seymour line pass overtook a freight train (in either direction). We believed that this gave a lot of operational flexibility, leaving room for expansion. Unfortunately, the heavy budget cuts saw the works limited to just one electrified platform and a trailing crossover, with just one siding being initially built. A minimalist approach. We managed to keep the remaining signals positioned so that, if funding becomes available later, the original spacing could still be installed without wasting anything already installed.

As members will understand, heavy growth in passenger numbers, both regional as well as metro, has occurred since that part of the planning. I am sure that, given the increases we have had to contend with recently, the original proposals would have proven to have been

correct, and I remain hopeful that at least some of these features might yet be built.

The "toecutters" have moved on, in some cases suggesting that the very cutbacks that they once championed were foolish and will only lead to heavy delays and congestion which will affect all operators. At least we can agree with them sometimes!

An arriving suburban train with a following Seymour line train close behind must now either "shunt and redock" to get out of the way, or the Seymour line train must wait until the spark can depart on its up journey. Whilst this arrangement remains at Craigieburn I guess all drivers can predict the results! I actually feel sorry for the signallers, who will have quite a time of it.

Some of the up direction signals are on rather spectacular structures. The ARTC, which is the track manager of the standard gauge track, would not allow new structures to be placed between the up line and their track. As a result, the project had to develop a new type of "half-gantry" to support several of the up broad gauge signals.

When the actual signal units were commissioned, we discovered that many of the signal heads had short range LED units installed by mistake. These have now been rectified. There are a few issues remaining, including paths to post phones and some minor adjustments to circuitry, particularly timing tracks. We all managed to get sunburnt, soaked, and frozen by the winds at various times. Other hardy souls included Russ Bidgood, Craig Haber, Peter Hoiles, Colin Holly, Greg Sweeney, Alan Towart, and the late Vic Greensill.

FRANKSTON – STONY POINT

Construction works for the installation of ATC along here have commenced. Once complete, the only sections of track remaining in Victoria operated using electric staff will be Upfield – Somerton (line currently disused), and Greensborough – Eltham.

DIAMOND CREEK

In-field works have commenced, with completion due later this year. There have been issues with the model of signal intended to be used here, hopefully this will be resolved without delaying the project.

FLINDERS STREET VIADUCT

All persons are working to get the signalling changes necessary due to the building construction in service by the time the building

starts to block the signals.

Banner indicators will be installed in the area that the building will unacceptably block view of the signals. These will be a smaller type than used in the Regional areas (and trialled a while back at Middle Footscray), but with the slower approach speed this should not be an issue.

As mentioned in the last issue, all signals across the viaduct will become home signals, with conversion to LED when manufacturer issues are resolved.

Post phones will not be provided due to safety reasons (try safely getting out of your cab on the Northern Viaduct), drivers needing to communicate with the area controller will have to use the radio or, as a fallback, mobile phones. Note that all calls to the area controller are recorded, and the home signals which will be converted from the current autos will not have points, therefore no caution order.

CLIFTON HILL – WESTGARTH

Planning has commenced for the conversion of this short section of single line track to double line. The major component of this project is the construction of a large new bridge, parallel to the existing structure which is thought to date from around 1888 and is not suitable to be widened. The new bridge will be built on the right hand side (for down trains) of the existing bridge, and will be built as a separate structure.

During the discussions, we have been trying to get the project to take the opportunity to effectively abolish 1A track (centre engine release and run-round road), which has been unused for some years.

Various scenarios would see one set of points re-used and either two or four proposed points no longer required. Of more benefit to us is the opportunity to move the existing platform 1 face out to align with the existing 1A track.

If this occurs, we will no longer have to dawdle at 40 km/h when departing Clifton Hill in the up direction, enabling better flow through of trains, particularly in the morning peak.

A further benefit is that this would then simplify a possible new island platform to be built here, with that new platform lining up to a possible third track which could be built towards Victoria Park across the bridge currently used to stable a couple of trains between peaks.

Given that our proposals would probably save the project several million dollars, and benefit Connex by speeding up operations, it amazes us that the powers that be are opposing us.

MACLEOD

The 50 km/h restriction for up trains has been removed after several years. It had been found that X'trapolis trains in particular could reach the level crossing before the boom barriers had fully descended, and circuitry changes were made to make the warning devices commence earlier.

TRAMWAY CROSSINGS

Jim Chrysostomou and I attended a meeting with Connex project people recently, at which it was proposed to remove the catch points that prevent trams entering the railway at the four metro crossings.

It appeared to us that the push for this change had come from Yarra Trams, who were concerned with the delays and damage caused when a tram derailed. The fact that trams derailed at all suggested to us that some form of protection might be required, and although we could see that the current system might not be ideal, it did appear better than their proposal, which was to simply tell the tram drivers not to go against a stop signal.

In response to our question of “what if the tram doesn't stop at the signal?” we were told that the overhead wiring being dead would cause the tram's emergency brakes to apply. Subsequent inquiries of some reliable sources (just love those tram gunzels!!) indicated that the trams would stop about as well as a train does after it loses overhead (in other words, keep rolling indefinitely). The current arrangements will remain at this stage.



Where Is It ...?



If you think you know where the above photo was taken, call Heather at the Union Office (9621122 or outside the metropolitan area 1800134095). If you answer correctly (only one guess per competition) your name will go into a hat and the winners, one Loco and one Sparks, will be drawn two weeks from the distribution of the current issue. This edition's prize include a union mug and a cap. Good luck!

Picture supplied by Trevor Penn.



Congratulations to **Geoff Walker, Driver, V/Line Passenger, Southern Cross** . Geoff correctly answered last edition's 'Where Is It', (pictured left) as Montague Street. Geoff has won a union cap and mug.

*See the next page for further pictures and articles on the old Montague Street Shipping Shed.

Montague Goods Shed



Submitted by: Trevor Penn with thanks to Des Jowett

In the Year of Grace 1908, plans were first mooted to relocate the functions of the existing Shipping Shed, a large 1870's brick structure located roughly where Southern Cross #9 and 10 platforms now stand, to a more convenient spot adjacent to Normanby Road, South Melbourne.

Big wheels turn slowly, and work on the new site did not commence until 1913. This major undertaking required a Southerly deviation of the Port Melbourne line between Clarendon and Ingliss Streets, and the Northward extension of Montague Street under the tracks to compensate for the abolition of the level crossing gates at Ferrars Street.

Although track work was underway in 1915, the Assassination of the Archduke Ferdinand and his missus in Sarajevo was beginning to affect the VR's capital works program, and the job was not completed until late 1921. (Damn the Kaiser!)

The Shipping Shed operated in conjunction with H.M. Customs Department for the next 5 decades, but the container revolution spelled the end for conventional cargo handling at Port Melbourne, and the cavernous structure was used to store rolls of newsprint from A.P.M. Maryvale until closure in 1987, that's to Steve Crabb and Tom Roper's contentious Light Rail experiment. In the early 1990's Melbourne Exhibition Centre, a.k.a. "Jeff's Shed" covered the area once occupied by the Shipping Shed, while the construction of Southbank tram depot and the diversion of Normanby Road have obliterated all traces of the yard.

Pictured above: The Shed's spacious interior viewed from the internal footbridge in the late 1950's
Prov. Neg #H H098

Shunt Vehicle Inspection

LOCATION; Nth Geelong Yard

Submitted by Howard Hand—South Dynon OHS/SHE Committee

VEHICLE; ROZX 70029 J.....Tare 17.20 / Load 58.80 / Length 11.30

The following is an example of how engineers can get it so wrong when modifying a vehicle without user consultation. An OH&S inspection conducted at North Geelong with the proposed Mildura shunt vehicle resulted in recommendations that steps on both sides of vehicle require being the same width as hand rails provided to prevent accidental misplacement of feet whilst negating the backward movement required alighting from the vehicle. Steps require being deeper so a better foot holds can be attained and be covered with anti slip paneling to prevent slipping.



The inside of the wagon has good handrails for the crew to be stable whilst wagon is in motion. There is also an area the crew member can escape to if there would be an impending collision. Both ends are equipped with a brake pipe dump valve and air gauge. Still to be progressed is a procedure for the operation of the vehicle in the field.



*Postscript: The vehicle was worked to Mildura under special conditions even after safety concerns were raised, only to be discovered that further modifications were required. How can an engineer get it so wrong?



HEALTH INSURANCE THAT MAKES CENTS

An additional 1% Medicare Levy is payable by Australian residents whose earnings exceed \$50K for single and \$100K for couples and are not privately insured for hospital cover.

WANT TO AVOID PAYING ADDITIONAL TAX?

**Ring John Dirito on 0409 406 622 or 8420 1888
to discuss the best option for you.....**

Report to the Divisional Officer re Radio Shunting V/Line Passenger.

By Michael Hinch

On Tuesday 26th of June, an update meeting was held to discuss issues ongoing with regard to radio shunt trials. More specifically the simple shunt on a platform and quarantined to the confines of that controlled area. It was again agreed that all trials would only involve a control group. Management had been previously advised that trials conducted up to this point would not be recognized because they were done at random, with random shifts, and therefore there remained no reasonable way of measuring results.

Present were Mick Buttigieg, Vic Moore (Shunters Rep), Robert Jackson and Bob Lawson (Shunters), Tony Keogh (Yard Foreman), Don Armstrong and myself.

It was agreed that the 15.33 arrival from Shepparton would be the daily trial job in which Shunters could acclimatize themselves with the newly agreed shunt commands. Further each Shunter and Driver involved in the control group would be given a briefing prior to each trial. The nominated Drivers in this group are myself, John Marotta, Andrew Morley, Ron Hall and Lionel Britton. Gary Jordon has since been added to the control group.

One of the trial conditions would involve the Shunters using loco lengths as a verbal measure when calling the shunt commands.

On Thursday 28th of June and subsequently on Thursday 5th of July the ongoing process of risk assessing the greater Spencer St. area continued on its path and the results are attached. Thus far we have only assessed operations associated with the Car Sidings. I am sure that you will see by the latest results that the biggest problem here is the lack of any real system and it will now be incumbent upon management to convene meetings to discuss a remedy before someone is seriously injured or worse.

On Monday 2nd of July the first platform radio shunt trial was carried out using the new protocols. This process has been ongoing on a daily basis and included Sunday 8th of July where nine Shunters were given the chance to perform the shunt moves on Platform one, all were pleased with the results, as most Shunters seemed to cope with transition to

radio shunting quite capably. With the benefit of a briefing prior to these trials, Gary Jordon grasped the concept quickly and I would expect that most Drivers would adapt just as capably. However it must be pointed out that no Driver should be thrust into any involvement in the new shunt method without the courtesy of a lesson.

It is disturbing to me that there seems to be an expectation within Management that there will be some hasty introduction of radio shunting at the completion of these trials. Our Manager insists that every Driver does a radio shunting refresher in continuation training and we are all completely up to date with it. This is of course incorrect. I have advised Management that the only acceptable course of action would be to firstly, finish the trials to everyone's satisfaction. Then have a collective debriefing where we would determine, as a group, what worked and what didn't work. When that process is complete, the information gathered would be turned over to RTI for inclusion in the training packages of both Drivers and Shunters. In this way, PDT's and LDS' would have an accredited means of ensuring that training would proceed properly and not with undue haste.

A point of dispute has been raised by the Shunters regarding the use of loco lengths during each shunt. They claim that they are unable to judge a loco length and are only able to determine distances in car lengths. I have tried to explain that it is extremely difficult for a Driver to judge random lengths when using a mirror and if we consider that we only have big locos and little locos then the equation should not be too difficult to grasp. The varying lengths of pass cars exaggerate any degree of difficulty for a Driver. They still insist that they cannot determine what a loco length is. I have suggested a compromise at a meeting on Friday 13th of July.

Present were Joe Guthrie (HR), Mick Buttigieg, Don Armstrong (Depot Manager), Robert Jackson, Steve Papaioannou and Bob Lawson (Shunters), Gary Jordon and myself.

It was proposed that we drop the word loco and carriage from the front of the word length and simply use that one word...length. I proposed that we agree on a definition for a standard length and suggested 20 metres. They agreed to consider this proposal but in the mean time may continue to accidentally use the word carriage or car. I explained that if they were to use either of those words, it would act as an immediate verbal trigger for a Driver to suddenly begin trying to determine

what it is they meant by those words. If there is not a clear and complete understanding of terms by which radio shunting is performed then it is pointless trying to guarantee that it is safe. I explained that if we were to hear the words car or carriage length then the safest option would be to apply the brake until we are all singing from the same hymn book. Steve Papaioannou made the very merit worthy suggestion that we should paint some kind of symbol on the platforms at a distance of 60, 40 and 20 metres from the buffers to be used as a means of judging the lengths. We are awaiting their decision on the issue.

It is anticipated that trials will eventually be extended beyond the confines of a platform but not until we have fulfilled the direction given by the Commission that we assess the risks inherent within our traditional work practices across the greater Spencer St. area and take whatever steps are necessary to eliminate any risk. We can only ensure that our trials are as safe as we can make them if we are armed with the knowledge learned from vigorous risk assessment.

The foundations of a building need to be sound or it will fall over; similarly we must get the basics of radio shunting perfected under the quarantined circumstances before it spreads beyond.

There is also the matter of third party intervention. By this I mean, another party whom can stop any radio shunt after having observed some impending

danger. In other words, we must identify who else may be able to “red light” a shunt. I would suggest that this responsibility should lie with both the Yard Foreman and the Lead Shunter depending upon the end of Spencer St. at which the shunt is being performed.

It is my experience that an overseeing person of authority is essential to establishing the safe passage of shunt traffic. It is timely that we should be asking questions about the role of the Yard Foreman in radio shunting. Timely because construction of a new building is about to commence and there would appear to be some dispute as to where the Yard Foreman will be located and what, if anything he will be able to see. In my view (and I am confident that my view is shared by all Drivers) it is a safety critical issue that the Foreman have a panoramic view of the Car Sidings, the platforms and other surrounding areas under his control.

The Yard Foreman needs to have “at a glance” observation of Pass yard operations. This can only reasonably be achieved by having a complete overview of his domain. Discussion needs to take place as to what means will be available to the Yard Foreman to both monitor and if necessary intervene in any shunting or other activity in the area. I believe that some kind of risk assessment and/or workload study should be carried out on the Yard Foreman’s daily list of tasks.

Point Cook Station

Submitted by Brian Hill

The Point Cook railway station is proposed to be built on the Werribee line beside the former

Laverton RAAF base and airfield. The station will be west of the extension of Palmers road which will eventually include an overpass of the railway line and Princes Freeway. The station will also be integrated with the activity centre proposed for the land north of the railway line.

Development planning is underway to decide the final location and construction of the station with this process expected to run until the end of 2007. A timeframe for constructing the station will then be decided. The construction is proposed to include the relocation of the Werribee bound passenger line to the south to allow for the construction of the new platform. The standard gauge freight line will be left as it is.

The new station will be an island style platform with pedestrian and bicycle access between the existing passenger rail lines and will of course include a new bus terminal, a large car park plus a drop off area and taxi parking.

Development planning for the station is underway to confirm the site and construction, other features will be finalised once the station layout is prepared.

A final decision on the layout and cost of the station is expected to be made by the end of 2007 before a construction timeframe is decided with the project budget being funded between 2011 and 2016,



Cab Committee Report

By Ian Cashill
V/Line Cab Committee Co ordinator

The Cab Committee has been very busy dealing with rough rides, test runs for various problems and modifications.

As most will have seen by now Vline has decided to change the corporate colours of its fleet and a lot of comments have been received both good and bad.

There was no consultation with this committee or the OH&S committee on the changed color scheme the project .

Sprinter 7007 has been introduced with its new colours and by the time you read this report it will be in normal service.

The cab has been altered, with a cut away section under the desk, together with the removal of the drivers' sliding door.

The purpose of this was to create greater leg space for taller drivers. The up grade also has quick release lock fitted to the cab to saloon

door. It also has had a new toilet and vanity arrangement. Together with the fitting of full glass panel with port hole window fitted to the drivers cab and instructors side .

Carriage set FSH 25 is the set with the new colours and has also entered service.

N 473 is also running around with modifications of the whistle cord removed both sides both ends and replaced with whistles toggles.

The ROA key switch has been fitted to this locomotive and a folder has been placed in each end of the Loco for your comments, so please take time to enter your comments on this important issue.

Some members have stated that they encountered problems with the V.C/Penalty brake initiating without warning. This may be a software type problem. Could all incidences be reported to the cab committee.

Also please remember to book any faults you encounter and follow up with the green union form.

The following loco's have been fitted out with CD/ AM FM radios:

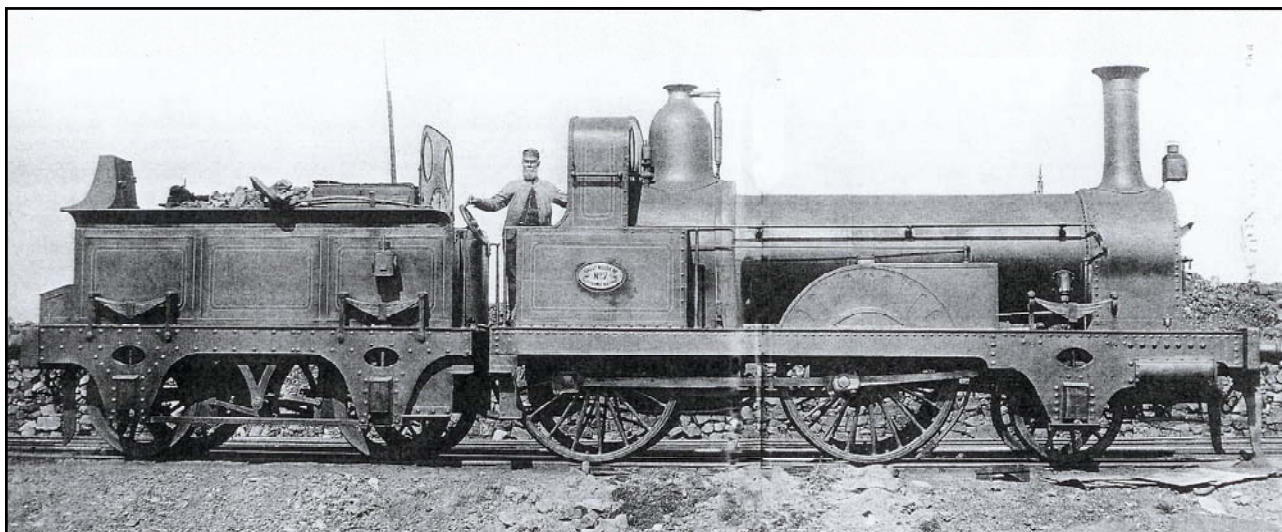
452 463 465 and 473 the next to be done.

It is a little known leg wetting fact that Ian Cashill, in a previous life, was Cab Committee Co-Ordinator for the Great North of Scotland Railway in the late 19th century.

In this rare view from the 1880's, we see Ian, resplendent in his bushy beard, having just "ticked off" the Union's new "Crew Comfort" cab.

Features include ample ventilation, and the absence of seats to prevent dozing off on those long winter nights, while the ergonomic tender handbrake is claimed to stop a train under any circumstances by the application of 4 greasy wooden brake blocks to the wheels.

A submission to management for brakes on the engine was unfortunately rejected, due to "budgetary restraints ye ken".



Level Crossings upgrade, Active Advance Warning Signs and Rumble Strips

Submitted by Brian Hill

On 25th June 2007 the Victorian government announced a program of works to improve level crossing safety by providing electronic Advance Warning Signs at 53 sites in regional Victoria. In addition, the program also provided for the installation of Rumble Strips at 200 level crossings.

The purpose of Active Advance Warning Signs is to provide an early indication to road users that a level crossing with light protection is operating or is about to operate.

In particular their function is to give vehicles additional warning time and allow them to stop safely, when approaching a crossing on a high speed road.

True to form, Vic Track has instigated a program to install the Active Advance Warning Signs, and Vic Roads are undertaking the installation of the Rumble Strips.

Vic Track are in the process of identifying and prioritizing locations to be upgraded with advance warning signs, which will identify all railway crossings on active rail lines that intersect an A or B road or highway.

It is proposed that the process will determine the amount of commercial vehicles (CV's) from the traffic volume using information supplied by Vic Roads, then determine the number of train services and place the crossings into categories based upon the following.

Category 1: Highways that cross passenger lines.

Category 2: Highways that cross freight lines. And then calculate a priority score by using $CV\% \times AADT \times \text{Train Volume}$ this process would exclude any crossings with a road speed limit lower than 80km/h.

'A' Roads – Provide the primary road links that connect Melbourne and the major provincial centers and are generally two lane, undivided roads with good line marking and delineation, sealed shoulders and reasonable overtaking opportunities.

'B' Roads -Provide the major link between regions not served by 'A' Roads, and are

significant tourist roads. They are generally two lane undivided roads with good line marking and delineation.

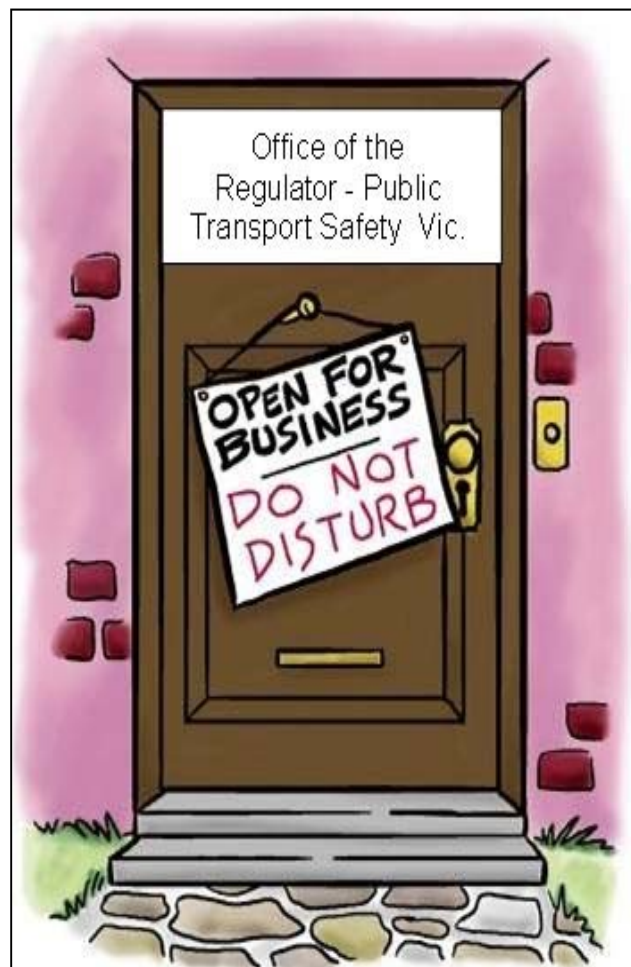
Rumble Strips are intended to provide a passive reminder to motorists that they are approaching a hazard and need to drive accordingly.

They are considered useful if a motorist has been driving in uniform conditions, with little or no traffic control for some time.

It is therefore considered that Rumble Strips are a cost effective additional measure to aid driver awareness upon the approach to an isolated level crossing and are only suitable for sealed roads.

In determining the sites for installation of Rumble Strips, under the Government's initiative Vic Roads have concentrated upon those sites that have no active protection.

At the time of writing, further evaluations as to the effectiveness of Rumble Strips was being conducted by Vic Roads. Until this evaluation is complete, no sites additional to those under the Government's announced initiative will be fitted. That's code for we have concerns with maintenance of the strips and someone else pays.



**RAIL, TRAM & BUS UNION
LOCOMOTIVE DIVISION
LEVEL 14, 222 KINGS WAY
SOUTH MELBOURNE VIC 3205**

TEL: 9682 1122

FAX: 9652 3344

TOLL FREE: 1800 134 095

E-MAIL: rtbu@iprimus.com.au

I.....THE UNDERSIGNED HEREBY APPLY TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE AUSTRALIAN RAIL, TRAM & BUS INDUSTRY UNION, AN ORGANISATION OF EMPLOYEES REGISTERED UNDER THE AUSTRALIAN *INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT*, 1988 AS AMENDED, AND HEREBY UNDERTAKE TO COMPLY WITH THE RULES AND BY-LAWS FOR THE TIME BEING OF THE UNION.

Mr Mrs Ms (Cross out which is not applicable)

Surname.....Given Name.....

Address.....Postcode.....

Home Phone No.Date of Birth.....

Employer.....Employee No.

Date Commenced.....Grade.....

Location.....Work Address.....

Work Phone No.Work Fax No.

I Certify That I Have Received A Copy Of Rule 14, Notification Of Resignation From Membership.

Dated the.....Day of..... Signature.....

(Please keep the following for your reference.)

A member may resign from membership of the Union by written notice addressed and delivered to the Secretary of his-her branch.

A notice of resignation from membership of the Union takes effect:

Where the member ceases to be eligible to become or remain a member of the Union; or

On the day on which the notice is received by the Union; or

On the day specified in the notice, which is a day not earlier than the day when the member ceases to be eligible to become a member, whichever is later; or

In other cases;

At the end of three months; or

On the day which specified in the notice;

Whichever is later.

Any subscription, fees, fines and levies owing but not paid by a former member of the Union in relation to a period before the member's resignation took effect, may be sued for and recovered in the name of the Union in a Court of competent jurisdiction, as a debt due to the Union.

A notice delivered to the Branch Secretary shall be deemed to have been received by the Union when it was delivered.

A notice of resignation that has been received by the Union is not invalid because it was not addressed and delivered to the Branch Secretary.

A resignation from membership of the Union is valid even if it is not effected in accordance with this Rule if the member is informed in writing by or on behalf of the Union that the resignation has been accepted.