



RTBU

QUEENSLAND BRANCH



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Dear Member,

Weekly Wrap

Welcome to the weekly wrap where we take a snapshot of what's been happening across the RTBU this week.

General

The entire RTBU Team wishes everyone a Happy New Year. We hope everyone got to spend some of the festive season with family or friends.

A reminder that Friday, 18 January, is Union Badge Day.

This day exists to honour those 12 members of one of our precursor Unions, the Australian Tramway Employees Association of who donned their union badges to challenge the heavy-handed tactics of the Tramways managers. At noon on 19 January 1912, they put on their Union badges, management's reaction triggered a General Strike, the rest is history.



General Strike Meeting 1912 in front of the old Trade Union Hall, Brisbane



During the general strike the Conservative Government called in the police to violently break up the strike

If you wear a badge on Friday, we want you to take a photo and send it in to us on Facebook or at info@rtbu.com.au. If you want a badge for next year's anniversary contact your District Organiser to see if you can score yourself one (don't worry too much if you miss out, there will be an order for more later in the year).

You can read more about the history of 1912 General Strike here:

[1912 General Strike](#)

We also wish to remind everyone that the Weekly Wrap exists to share our stories as members of the Union. So, if you have a win in the workplace or you feel that there is an important issue that you want raised in the Weekly Wrap:

[Send your stories here](#)

Also, it should be mentioned we love photos for the Wrap so please don't hesitate to send us some.

For members at Aurizon fighting the good fight to keep and improve our hard-fought conditions, the bargaining representatives want to inform everyone that our actions have been very successful. Members have proven that with a well-organised action plan things can be achieved. We hope that soon Aurizon comes to see the light and understand that you must respect your workers if you want to keep your business running smoothly.



Aurizon Combined Unions Day of Action, Change the Rules gathering, Queens Beach Bowen

Central District

Bruce has a couple of very important messages he wants to spread as we enter the new year, and before the wheels of business roll into full gear.

He wants to remind everyone that medicals are part of all rail safety workers lives and you may be one of those who will be required to undergo a compulsory medical this year. Remaining medically fit to do your job is part of the employment relationship and its sad that we have seen many long-term members of the RTBU have their employment terminated due to failing their medicals, due to the strict safety requirements imposed on rail safety workers. With this new national rail safety regime, it is very very difficult for the RTBU to assist members after a failed medical we will always do our best but it's a hard slog if the doctor says that you are not fit to do your job.

Therefore, if you have any concerns for your health, this time of year is a perfect time to speak to your GP and start a health plan that can get you fit in time for your medical getting in early and working with you GP is a great news year's resolution to keep.

Bruce has also been made aware of several major safety incidents in the last couple of weeks that has been of concern to him about the pressures placed on members by their employers, and the dangers of being distracted on the job.

Therefore, there are two important things you can do to minimise the possibility of an incident:

1. take a moment to think about what you are doing, especially when doing complicated work, always be alert to what is going on in your surroundings; and
2. finally, if you aren't confident or feel unsafe doing a task speak up and speak out.

Our Union wholeheartedly wants everyone to come home safe from work and will continue to fight for safer workplaces, but safety isn't just a legal business, it's all our business.

Northern District

On the 24 December (Xmas eve) Aurizon dismissed a Townsville Locomotive Driver for an alleged over speed incident that they claim occurred in a company vehicle between Hughenden and Townsville on 14 August. The employee concerned had been off sick for a considerable amount of time due to an ongoing back problem and after exhausting all his Personal Leave was receiving Income Protection payment from his Superannuation, so it was not costing Aurizon anything financially if they had left the matter to be resolved after the Christmas break. The employee had 25 years' service with an exemplary history and was devastated made worse by receiving the dismissal on Christmas eve. This is yet another example of the non-caring attitude that the company has towards its employees who are just a number to the senior management who are currently running the business. The RTBU is pursuing the matter through an unfair dismissal case with Fair Work Australia.

The local QR Traincrew representative for the Townsville depot has been called following the current representative stepping down for personal reasons. Nominations have been invited from the membership to fill the role and if more than one nomination is received a ballot will be conducted.

Southern District

On Thursday Ross and Ren met with some of the RMC Train Controller staff to discuss the upcoming EA negotiations and possible key issues. Due to the information captured it will prove to be valuable moving forward to assisting the Staff covered under this agreement in gaining better conditions in hope. With the bargaining for new agreements commencing soon, it is more important than ever to have conversations with your workmates about what you want to see improved in these new agreements, and communicate this feedback to your workplace representatives, and officials.

Kelvin Steer, Loco Sub-Division Passenger Secretary and RTBU National President, Shayne Kummerfeld, want to remind everyone that mental health is just as important as your physical health. We all know that this industry can be a stressful one, and if you think you are having problems with your mental health go and seek help. If you're on the other side of the fence and you notice a workmate struggling, be the one to start a conversation. Sometimes all someone needs to be asked is "are you okay?" to help get them started with seeking help.

Unity is Strength



Owen Doogan
State Secretary