

BUS EXPRESS

News and views from life in the bus lane



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RTBU NSW Tram and Bus Division



Defective bus? Refuse to drive it



Drivers are being disciplined for refusing to drive unsafe defective buses through Sydney traffic, despite admissions by State Transit Authority (STA) that drivers risk fines by doing so. Members have been issued infringement notices by STA but as far as the police are concerned, the driver is breaking the law.

NOBODY can instruct you to break the law.

If a supervisor/radio room tries to force you to drive an unsafe defective vehicle, you should refuse on safety grounds and wait for a changeover. You should advise the Union immediately and the Union will support you.

Your local health and safety representative (HSR) should be notified as soon as possible.

Keep relevant notes on your journal including any attempts to intimidate you to continue driving the vehicle in question.

Division Secretary Chris Preston said drivers were asked to drive buses with smashed blinkers, high beam fixed on, brake lights not working and back doors flapping open.

"Drivers are concerned that STA is taking a hardline approach when an accident or maintenance issue arises while the bus is in service. All drivers see it as part of their job to consider the safety of passengers and other motorists and comply with road rules. When they deem a bus is unsafe to drive they rightly request that it be taken out of service and replaced.

Chris said union was backing members who had been disciplined and called on the Transport Minister to intervene.

"The RTBU is calling on the Minister to step in and back the drivers on this issue."

Light rail grounded after derailments



Buses have been replaced trams for some weeks now following the grounding of light rail after two cases of derailments.

There is no suggestion of driver error and instead the issue seems to originate from a new section of track that was not compatible with the trams.

The Tram and Bus Division want to give a big thank you firstly to the drivers of the STA buses that Veolia has resorted to hiring to cover the grounded trams.

The Division would also like to congratulate the light rail delegates who have been supporting drivers and keeping everyone informed.

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Delegate profile: Peter Grech



The Division's delegate at the North Sydney bus depot is Peter Grech.

Peter has been driving buses for 15 years and has been an RTBU member for just as long, working for all of his driving career out of the North Sydney depot.

In that time he has been a relief delegate for six years and the delegate proper for the last four.

Earlier in his working life, Peter worked as maître de at a restaurant before swapping

hospitality for getting behind the wheel.

And it's a place he spends a lot of time, commuting to work everyday from the Central Coast, where he moved 12 years ago after a long time in Sydney.

At home away from work Peter spends most of his time with his wife and two kids, getting involved in his children's sport and catching up with horse racing when he can.

When asked why he enjoys his role as depot delo he says:

"It's good helping members when they have any issues at work.

"I enjoy the back and forth and sometimes the arguing, I won't say it's the love that I get, but it's a good challenge.

"And do you want to know how I got involved with the union? I was conned into it by Chris Preston!" he jokes.



Divisional Secretary Chris Preston and Divisional President Gary Way



Vice President Brett Peters
Know your Rights

Section 22

Acting out of Classification

22.1

An employee engaged temporarily in a higher grade shall be paid the rate to which they would be entitled if they were appointed to that grade.

22.2

The conditions applying to the classification in which an employee acts shall be their conditions whilst so acting.

Northern ruckus prompts safety call

More antisocial behaviour reports on Northern Beaches buses have prompted the Division to demand the Government get real on driver safety.

A 151 route driver reported a major brawl requiring police to attend. The driver said while inbound at Mona Vale junction at 3am last Thursday a fight broke out and police were forced to use capsicum spray and a taser to bring one man under control.

The driver said the main issue was a lack of publicity about violence with drivers forced to put up with regular abuse.

Divisional President Gary Way said the union is continuing calls to ramp up late night security to protect drivers.

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