

# BUS EXPRESS

News and views from life in the bus lane



Edition No. 2 • 20 July 2011

RTBU NSW Tram and Bus Division



## The New IR Laws – Where to Now?

The new State Industrial Relations laws have passed into law.

Pay rises for State Government workers are now capped at 2.5% – below the level of inflation – with any additional wage rises now tied to productivity (cost savings).

The legislation also requires the Industrial Relations Commission to consent to government policy. This means there is no longer an independent umpire in disputes over wages and conditions, and NSW workers no longer have legal recourse when dealing with employers.

The questions now are:

- Who or what body will define productivity?
- When and how will the effects be felt for bus drivers?
- How will it effect the current STA award negotiations?

The RTBU is currently gathering information about how the new laws will affect members and hope to offer some information sessions in the near future.

In the meantime, you can let your local MP know exactly how you feel about the IR laws via <http://betterstate.org.au>.



## Burwood Depot Challenges Parking Zones

Burwood depot is currently in urgent talks with Burwood Council over the sudden change of parking zones around the depot.

The zones were changed as part of the new business district parking policy implemented by the council, which has changed all parking in the area to one-hour spots.

The parking on Luke Street was previously a mixture of unrestricted parking on one side and four-hour parking on the other.

There is no parking provided at the depot and the changes force staff to walk 600m up the road to access unrestricted parking that can encompass their 12-hour shifts.

This is a serious safety concern, particularly for staff walking alone at night.

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## Drivers Call for Extra Security

Drivers around Sydney have noticed an increased level of alcohol and drug-fuelled violence on buses and are concerned that not enough security staff are being deployed consistently to manage the problem.

Security staff are being shuffled around from region to region to fill gaps as they arise, when a continuous, regular presence in each area is required to maintain safety for passengers and staff.

As a result of union negotiations with the STA, security guard numbers remained at summertime levels on the Northern Beaches after the end of summer because the level of violence showed no sign of slowing down as the weather cooled.



This was a good outcome, however, the ad hoc allocation of security guards is less than ideal.

A recent operation organised by the RTA on the Northern Beaches, where police specifically patrolled bus stops known to be trouble hot-spots, was very effective at curbing

antisocial behaviour in the short term. The union would like to see this kind of activity regularly rolled out into other Sydney regions.

In order for the STA to be fully informed about the number of violent and antisocial incidents and to be able to arrange the necessary security presence, the union is urging drivers to complete a TSIR report at the back of their daily journal for every incident and fax it at the end of the shift to the STA (the fax number is on the form).

It's also a good idea to take a copy of the report and give it to your union delegate so they can keep track of how many reports are being filed.

Before the last state election RTBU NSW Secretary Alex Claassens called for better CCTV coverage and lighting across the entire public transport network and 400 extra Transit and Bus Protection Officers to provide a visible safety boost.

The RTBU is continuing to lobby State Government on this issue and believes that better incident reporting will demonstrate the need for a larger security presence.

## Uniform Allowance Dispute Goes to Court

As part of the 2007 Award, STA agreed to provide a new uniform to all drivers, and every year after to pay a clothing allowance to cover replacements.

However, the new uniform was never released in its entirety and many drivers were unable to get a complete uniform.

The annual clothing allowance was also not paid.

The RTBU solicitor attended the Local Court on June 2 as part of the process of claiming the allowance from STA.

"We will be issuing STA with subpoenas for a complete list of the clothing that makes up the uniform and a calculation of the cost of a complete uniform," said Bus and Tram Division Secretary Chris Preston.

This information is due by July 27 and the RTBU will then be able to calculate costs to be claimed from STA.

The matter will be next in court on 24 August.

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