



FOOTPLATE

NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH / LOCOMOTIVE DIVISION

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Constance: 'No more drivers; no more union'

In addition to a media release today, the RTBU Locomotive Division would like to address the recent comments made by the NSW Transport Minister, Andrew Constance, in relation to the future of the public transport sector in NSW. It was stated by Mr. Constance at a function for the Committee for Economic Development (the CEDA) of Australia that he isn't 'going to have to deal with the rail unions anymore' because, as of 2019, we will have technology that allows for the introduction of driverless trains and buses. According to Constance, the RTBU is opposed to this because it will mean that there are 'no more train drivers; no more union members'.

The RTBU Locomotive Division views these comments as gutless and provocative. However, his comments – in our view – require a frank and honest assessment regarding the true meaning of his words.

Constance gloats about the fact that – by 2019 – there will be 'no more drivers' and 'no more union members' due to technological change and privatization. What he really means is that he hopes there will be 'no more jobs'. It is interesting, at the very least, to note that Mr. Constance is so afraid of the union movement that gloating about job losses seems more appealing than locating his spine. It really does beg the question: how does one have so much self-confidence as to rejoice at the thought of destroying peoples' lives and livelihoods, all whilst lacking the competence and confidence to take on and or develop a relationship the union movement?

Of course, the RTBU Locomotive Division would like to commend Mr. Constance on his truly impeccable timing. Making comments such as these amidst enterprise agreements negotiations between the RTBU and the rail entities that cover the public transport sector in NSW is, without a doubt, ill-advised and extremely short-sighted. For this, we would like to thank you for reminding the members of the RTBU that it is the union – and not the government – who will fight for them when the time comes.

We will be raising these comments during the current negotiations and thank the minister for showing his hand during, and not after, these negotiations.

The RTBU Locomotive Division has a long-standing and proud history of representing the interests of the membership and defending the rights of the workers in our industry. We are determined. We are organized. We are not afraid to meet a bully head on and, most importantly, we are united.

Mr. Constance's comments thus lend to two possible conclusions. Either he is incredibly inept, or he is perplexed and perhaps frightened by the strength of the RTBU Locomotive Division. Perhaps both of these statements are true. Either way, it would seem as though Mr. Constance would stand to benefit by honing his negotiation skills because not dealing with the rail unions is, unfortunately, not an option.

Inside the heart of every RTBU Locomotive member burns a fire, and Mr. Constance's comments have done nothing else but ensure that our flame is burning much brighter today than it was yesterday. The RTBU Locomotive Division will never bow to the whims of small-minded politicians who we have seen come and go since our union was formed. This is because the workers that are united will never be defeated.

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