



RTBU

The Hon Michael McCormack MP
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
CANBERRA ACT 2600
By email: michael.mccormack.mp@aph.gov.au

17 March 2020

Dear Deputy Prime Minister

Coronavirus – Public Transport

Further to my correspondence dated 3 March 2020, the RTBU is working closely and collaboratively with rail, tram and bus operators and state governments at this difficult time to limit the spread of COVID-19 (Coronavirus).

As you would be aware, the industry is considering all options and is watching closely as other parts of the world implement mitigation strategies including more carriages on trains so passengers can sit further apart or even scaled back operations.

Despite this, the RTBU still has grave concerns for the safety of our members and the public.

While we appreciate that 'essential' gatherings like public transport keep the economy moving, the risk of transmission is no less likely because they are 'essential'. During peak periods a metropolitan passenger train can carry over 1,200 passengers standing and seating at one time, in addition to hundreds of people waiting on a busy platform.

It is clear that the rail network is one of the highest risk locations for contagion and that should the spread reach a 'tipping point' that the network, or at least parts of it, must be shut down due to the imminent risk to the health and safety of workers and the public.

While we are aware that planning is taking place, our members want to ensure their health and welfare is at the centre of decisions regarding the operation of public transport services.

We respectfully request that the Federal Government provides the RTBU and other relevant unions with a full briefing on the process for determining whether and when public transport networks shall be temporarily closed as of the COVID-19 response.

Please provide your response by COB 20 March 2020.

Yours sincerely

Mark Diamond
National Secretary

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