

Trams to stop as drivers plan strike action

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Melbourne's trams will come to a standstill for four hours later this month, with a second strike announced as workers step up their fight for a 6 per cent annual wage rise.

About 1500 drivers and customer service personnel at Yarra Trams will down tools for four hours between 10am and 2pm on Friday,

August 30. The Rail, Tram and Bus Union is also marching ahead with plans to disrupt the network on Monday that same week, on August 26, warning commuters of a wave of cancellations and delays as drivers refuse to do voluntary overtime and cover shifts on their day off.

Yarra Trams is offering a 3 per cent annual pay rise over four years and has offered up two enterprise bargaining agreements which have

been rejected by the union. The offers involved rolling over the existing wage deal, but increasing a cap on part-time work.

The union's state secretary Luba Grigorovitch said the strike action was necessary as Yarra Trams did not want to improve members' pay and conditions. "Our members have emphatically rejected a substandard EBA offer from Yarra Trams on two occasions because neither offer

respected or valued their hard work," Ms Grigorovitch said.

Yarra Trams wants to lift a cap on the number of part-time workers on the network from 4 per cent to 15 per cent to help improve rostering, especially during busy periods.

A spokesman for Yarra Trams said: "This action is being announced by the RTBU despite a recent productive meeting in the Fair Work Commission."