

More tram strife on the cards as pay dispute drags on

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Melbourne public transport commuters can expect to face more disruptions in the near future after a half-day industrial action stopped the tram network yesterday.

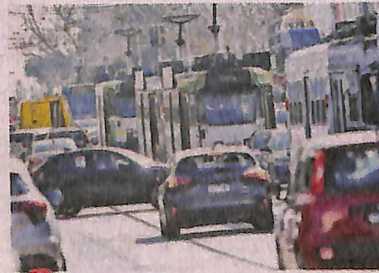
But the public transport union flagged the possibility of further strikes as part of a bitter dispute for better pay.

About 1500 Yarra Trams drivers and customer service staff stopped work for four hours yesterday.

Future strikes remain on the table, said Rail, Tram and Bus Union state secretary Luba Grigorovitch.

"I've made that clear," she said, adding that she was not optimistic the dispute would be resolved soon.

"I would hope both Yarra Trams and the government come forward with an offer that is one I would



Trams return to Malvern depot ahead of yesterday's strike.

endorse and take back to the membership, but ... I'm not holding my breath."

Union spokesman Amedeo D'Aprano said: "We won't be budging on job security, job safety."

Yarra Trams CEO Nicolas Gindt slammed the strike, and any potential future strikes, as unnecessary.

On Monday the two parties will return to the Fair Work

Commission to start a "new phase" of negotiations, he said.

The union wants a 6 per cent annual pay rise over three years, while Yarra Trams is offering 3 per cent over four years.

Minister for Roads Jaala Pulford urged both parties to resolve the dispute soon. "This is always very inconvenient for the tens of thousands of people who are on our trams every day," she said.