

Tram strikes called off

Tram strikes scheduled to cruel the grand prix have been called off, after the Andrews government intervened to put an end to the industrial war between Yarra Trams and the public transport union.

Last week, the Labor government sought to launch legal action to stop the Rail, Tram and Bus Union from halting trams six times over the first two weeks of March, including over the four days of the Australian Grand Prix at Albert Park.

The government had for months resisted calls to intervene in the dispute.

But yesterday, a government spokesman said Public Transport Minister Melissa Horne would intervene to broker a deal and the government would drop the legal action

in exchange for the union calling off the March strikes.

"The government has agreed to convene high level mediation between Yarra Trams and the RTBU, commencing today, to be attended by senior leadership from Yarra Trams and the RTBU ... and facilitated by the head of Industrial Relations Victoria," the spokesman said.

The Age understands there has been backlash from some within the Labor Party about plans to refer the union to the Fair Work Commission to terminate or suspend the strikes.

Yarra Trams chief executive Julien Dehornoy said talks between the union and the operator started yesterday.

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