

Pay rise for tram drivers

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Tram drivers will get a 3.5 per cent-a-year pay rise and Yarra Trams will employ fewer part-timers than it had wanted to, in an offer that has finally been accepted by the public transport union.

The major breakthrough will mark the end of a bitter 12-month dispute between the Rail, Tram and Bus Union and the tram operator. The Andrews government brokered a deal on Thursday night in a bid to halt a series of strikes that would have cruelled the Grand Prix.

The union had demanded a 6 per cent annual pay rise until a few months ago, and has settled on 3.5 per cent over four years.

Yarra Trams has agreed to drop a cap on part-time workers from a proposed 15 per cent. The cap is currently at 4 per cent.

Under the first two years of the contract, this would be raised to 6 per cent, then to 8 per cent in the third year and 10 per cent in the final year of the new wage deal.

Yarra Trams has said it would not seek to increase this further in the next agreement; part-time workers have been guaranteed a minimum of 23 hours' work a week.