



PROTECT OUR DRIVERS

PUBLIC TRANSPORT SAFTEY NEWSLETTER

AN INDEPENDANT, GOVERNMENT-ACKNOWLEDGED PUBLIC SAFETY INITIATIVE RECOGNISED THROUGH THE PERMIERS CODING CHALLANGE

ISSUE 2 | MARCH 2026

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

February has been a significant month for public transport safety across Australia. While our networks remain among the safest in the world, several incidents this month have highlighted the ongoing need for vigilance, respectful behaviour, and continued investment in safety infrastructure.

SafeStops-Australia remains committed to providing clear, factual, and responsible safety information. Our purpose is to support safer behaviour, informed discussion, and continuous improvement across all transport environments.

This issue includes updated national safety insights, a detailed review of recent incidents, and a focused analysis on driver safety following the assault of a NSW bus driver.

Public transport is safe — but safety is never “finished.” It is a continuous effort shared by passengers, operators, governments, and communities.

— Jayden Rammell, SafeStops Australia

NATIONAL TRANSPORT SAFETY SNAPSHOT

National transport safety data for early 2026 continues to reflect stable long-term trends, with several notable developments:

Key National Indicators

- Road transport remains the dominant contributor to transport-related fatalities nationwide, consistent with multi-year patterns.
- Rail-related fatalities and serious injuries remain within expected ranges, with the majority occurring in high-risk environments such as level crossings and rail corridors.
- Public transport modes — including buses, trams, and rail — continue to record significantly lower fatality rates per passenger kilometre than private vehicles.
- Several states have reported increases in near-miss reporting, attributed to improved reporting systems rather than increased risk.

Emerging Trends

- Increased reporting of antisocial behaviour on late-night services in metropolitan areas.
- Growth in passenger volumes in Brisbane, Perth, and Melbourne following service frequency improvements.
- Early indications of reduced pedestrian incidents near rail corridors following targeted awareness campaigns.

These trends reinforce the importance of evidence-based safety policy and continued investment in public transport infrastructure.

BUS AND COACH SAFETY OVERVIEW

Bus travel continues to be one of the safest forms of road transport in Australia, supported by strong regulatory frameworks and ongoing safety reforms.

National Observations

- Buses account for less than 2% of fatal road crashes, despite millions of passenger journeys completed each week.
- Hospitalisation data continues to show that bus-occupant injuries remain low relative to other road users.
- Several operators have expanded driver-protection measures, including enhanced cabin barriers, CCTV upgrades, and improved late-night protocols.

Policy Developments

- National discussions continue regarding consistent driver-protection screens across urban networks.
- States are reviewing late-night service safety protocols following increased reports of antisocial behaviour.
- The Hunter Valley crash reforms continue to influence national safety standards, including seatbelt requirements and improved passenger-information systems.

These developments reflect a growing focus on protecting both passengers and frontline transport workers.

Rail, Tram, and Level-Crossing Safety

Rail and light-rail networks remain highly safe, but several recurring risk factors continue to require attention.

Key Insights

- Urban tram networks have reported increased pedestrian distraction incidents, particularly involving mobile phone use near crossings.
- Regional rail operators continue to highlight challenges with vehicle non-compliance at passive level crossings.
- Several states have reported measurable reductions in unsafe pedestrian behaviour following targeted education campaigns.

Infrastructure and Policy Updates

- Upgrades to level-crossing visibility and signalling continue in regional NSW, Victoria, and Queensland.
- Tram networks in Melbourne and Adelaide are trialling enhanced pedestrian-warning systems.
- Rail operators are expanding platform-edge safety messaging, particularly during peak periods.

These measures support safer interactions between pedestrians, vehicles, and rail systems.

RECENT PUBLIC TRANSPORT SAFETY

The following incidents were publicly reported during January–February 2026 and are included for awareness purposes:

Charlestown, NSW (February 2026)
A bus driver was assaulted late at night and sustained a stab wound to the hand. The driver received medical treatment and police investigations are ongoing. The incident has renewed calls for stronger driver-protection measures.

Perth, WA (February 2026)
A minor collision involving a Transperth bus and a private vehicle resulted in no serious injuries but caused temporary service delays.

Brisbane, QLD (January 2026)
A rail near-miss involving a pedestrian at a suburban level crossing prompted renewed calls for crossing-safety awareness.

Adelaide, SA (February 2026)
A tram service experienced a low-speed collision with a vehicle at an intersection. No serious injuries were reported, and investigations are ongoing.

These incidents demonstrate the importance of situational awareness, respectful behaviour, and continued investment in safety infrastructure.

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT SAFETY

Despite isolated incidents, several encouraging trends have emerged this month:

Infrastructure Improvements

- Multiple states have expanded CCTV coverage at bus stops, stations, and interchanges.
- New lighting upgrades have been completed at several regional bus stops and rail platforms.
- Queensland and Victoria have announced additional funding for station-accessibility improvements.

Operational Enhancements

- Driver-protection screens are being trialled on selected urban bus routes.
- Rail operators have reported improved compliance with platform-edge safety following targeted awareness campaigns.
- Several networks have expanded staff presence during late-night services.

Community Engagement

- Safety-awareness campaigns have seen increased participation, particularly among young passengers.
- Schools and community groups have begun incorporating public-transport safety education into local programs.

These developments highlight the value of collaborative safety initiatives and ongoing review.

SAFETY INSIGHT: SUPPORTING DRIVER SAFETY

This months Safety Insight focus is Supporting Driver Safety.

Following the recent assault on a NSW bus driver, this month's safety insight focuses on how passengers can support safer working environments for drivers.

Passenger Actions That Improve Driver Safety

- Maintain respectful communication and follow driver instructions.
- Avoid behaviour that may distract the driver, particularly during vehicle movement.
- Report aggressive or unsafe behaviour through official channels.
- Offer space and patience during busy periods or service disruptions.
- Keep aisles clear and avoid standing near the driver unless necessary.

A safe environment for drivers contributes directly to a safe environment for passengers.

ABOUT SAFESTOPS-AUSTRLAIA

SafeStops Australia is an independent public transport safety awareness initiative focused on promoting safer behaviour, informed discussion, and continuous improvement in transport environments.
The project received official recognition through the Premier's Coding Challenge and is currently developed and hosted independently.

NEXT ISSUE PREVIEW

- Updated national transport safety statistics
- A focus on bus stop and station environment design
- Community reporting guidance and safety tips
- A feature on regional transport safety challenges

DISCLAIMER

This publication summarises publicly reported information for general safety awareness purposes. It does not replace official transport authority, emergency service, or law enforcement communications.

© 2026 SAFESTOPS AUSTRALIA.
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
THIS NEWSLETTER PROVIDES GENERAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT SAFETY INFORMATION ONLY.