SafeStops Australia

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Public Transport Safety Newsletter

An independent, government-acknowledged public safety initiative.



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This newsletter provides general public transport safety information only.

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Message from the President

Australia has seen a range of events within the Public Transport industry this month with some good things, and some not so good things. These moments remind us of the constant balance between progress and challenge that defines our transport networks. Every incident, every improvement, and every operational milestone contributes to the bigger picture of how we move people safely across the country.

This month, we witnessed major rail closures across Queensland, placing enormous pressure on drivers, operators, and passengers alike. Despite long hours, heavy congestion, and demanding conditions, our bus drivers stepped up with professionalism and resilience. Their efforts ensured that communities remained connected, even when the rail network could not. Their dedication deserves recognition, and it highlights the importance of respecting and supporting the people who keep our transport systems running.

Message from the President

We also saw several safety-related incidents across multiple states — from platform-edge near-misses in New South Wales to boarding injuries in Victoria and pedestrian-related risks in Queensland. While many of these incidents were minor, they share a common theme: preventable behaviour. Distraction, impatience, and inattention continue to be leading contributors to public transport safety risks. These events serve as a reminder that safety is not just the responsibility of drivers or operators — it is a shared responsibility between every person who uses the network.

At the same time, we have seen positive developments. Victoria's extension of free public transport has encouraged more people to choose sustainable travel options. Infrastructure upgrades across Western Australia and South Australia have contributed to improved safety outcomes. National data shows a decline in passenger injuries and a growing emphasis on community reporting, demonstrating that awareness campaigns and public engagement are making a real difference.

Message from the President

As SafeStops-Australia marks its first year, I am proud of how far this initiative has come. What began as a small project has grown into a recognised safety platform that reaches thousands of people each month. Our mission has always been simple: to promote safer behaviour, informed discussion, and a culture of respect across all modes of public transport. This month's events reinforce why that mission matters.

Looking ahead, we will continue to expand our educational content, strengthen our safety messaging, and highlight the real-world experiences of drivers, passengers, and operators. We will also continue advocating for safer environments — not just through technology and infrastructure, but through awareness, patience, and community responsibility.

Message from the President

Thank you to everyone who has supported SafeStops-Australia over the past year. Your engagement, feedback, and shared commitment to safety are what make this initiative possible. Together, we can continue building a safer, more respectful, and more connected transport network for all Australians.

Stay safe,
Jayden Rammell President,
SafeStops-Australia



Featured Poster of the Month!

Staying seated plays an important role in ensuring Driver and Passenger safety. This is because when passengers are not seated the driver becomes distracted causing them to take their eyes off the road, increasing the chance of veering off path or worse.

*This poster mainly goes for Coaches and not urban buses.

When not seated properly you expose yourself and others to the possibility of being severely injured. This goes especially for older non-seat belt School Buses, and Low-Floor Urban Buses.



Overall, the general public has just as much responsibility keeping the community safe as the bus driver does. And before you go messing around always remember, your actions could be fatal to not only you, but other people around you.

Victoria Extends Free Public Transport Until December 2026

In March 2026, the State of Victoria announced plans to make public transport free for all residents.

This decision came in response to the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, which caused a sharp rise in Australian fuel prices and led to nationwide concern.

The initiative aimed to reduce fuel consumption across Victoria and encourage more people to use public transport for their daily travel.

In April, the Victorian Government confirmed that the free-fare period would be extended until 31 May 2026, following the completion of the initial one-month trial. Alongside this announcement, Victoria also revealed that public transport fares will be half-price from 1 June 2026 until 1 January 2027.

This demonstrates a strong initiative to reduce fuel usage during a global crisis affecting not only Australia, but much of the world

*Any changes to this will be communicated in later Issues

QLD Rail Closure Chaos

From 3 April 2026, a major scheduled rail closure took place across large sections of Queensland while essential track repairs and maintenance were carried out.

During this period, many bus operators stepped in to replace trains between countless stations, keeping Queensland moving despite the disruption.

A huge note of respect to the following operators: Brisbane Bus Lines, Brisbane City Council, Caboolture Bus Lines, Cavbus Group, Clarks Logan City Bus Service, Hornibrook Bus Lines, Kangaroo Bus Lines, Kinetic, Logan Coaches, Mt Gravatt Bus Service, Park Ridge Transit, Red & White Coaches, Southern Cross Transit, Surfside Buslines, Thompson's Bus Service, Transdev Queensland, Transit Systems QLD, Westside Bus Company, and Wide Bay Transit.



QLD Rail Closure Chaos

For an entire month, drivers from these companies operated rail replacement services from 4:30am until 12:00am every day, often with minimal breaks and extremely high passenger demand. They are now finally returning home to a well-deserved rest before resuming their regular duties.

The closures brought heavy congestion at key stations, with queues stretching up to 300 metres in some locations. Passengers reported waiting 25–45 minutes just to reach the front of the line.

Despite the pressure, Queensland's bus drivers delivered an extraordinary effort to keep the state moving.

Image 2



TransLink Releases all planned Rail Closures for the rest of 2026

On 3 April 2026, TransLink released a full rail-closure calendar outlining all planned shutdowns from April through to the end of December 2026.

According to the calendar, both Third-Party works and Queensland Rail works will result in closures across most of May, June, July, August, September, October, and November, before easing in December 2026.

This means Rail Replacement buses will be heavily relied on for the next seven months, with operators across Queensland preparing for another extended period of high-demand service.

Passengers are reminded to treat all Rail Replacement drivers with the utmost respect. Many of these drivers travel from different regions and spend weeks living in hotels, away from family and friends, to ensure Queenslanders can still reach their destinations.

Rail Replacement buses can be frustrating... we understand that, but the bus operators have no control over the closures. They are doing everything they can to help you get where you need to go safely and efficiently.

Major Safety Issue after return to school

The return to school often brings a difficult adjustment period for many bus drivers — both school and urban. After two weeks of quieter routes, drivers must quickly adapt to higher passenger volumes, louder environments, and increased distraction levels.

While most students behave responsibly, the sudden shift back to full loads of teenagers can create stressful conditions for drivers who are trying to maintain focus and operate safely.

Fatigue, noise, and constant movement inside the bus all increase the risk of mistakes — and even the most experienced drivers are not immune. As the saying goes, “Mistakes are part of learning, but not all mistakes can be prevented.”

This reminder comes after a serious incident in Melbourne on 20 April 2026, where a 12-year-old boy’s right arm and school bag became trapped in the rear doors of a bus. The child was dragged approximately 350 metres before the driver stopped. Whether the driver was aware of the entrapment is still under investigation.

The driver, operating for Ventura Bus Lines, has been stood down pending investigation and disciplinary review.

Incidents like this highlight the importance of:

- giving drivers space to concentrate
- reducing distractions
- boarding and exiting safely
- respecting the driver’s instructions

As students return to school, a little patience and awareness from passengers can make a significant difference in keeping everyone safe.

Bus and Coach Safety Overview

Buses and Coaches remain one of the safest forms of road transport in Australia, but their safety depends heavily on how passengers behave and how the vehicle is operated. Unlike smaller vehicles, buses have unique handling characteristics, larger blind spots, and a much higher reliance on stability and weight distribution. Understanding these factors help the community appreciate the challenges drivers face every day.

Coaches, in particular, operate at higher speeds and often travel long distances. Their braking distances are significantly longer, and sudden movements inside the cabin can affect vehicle balance. Urban buses, on the other hand, operate in dense traffic, with frequent stops, unpredictable pedestrians, and passengers constantly boarding and exiting. Both environments require drivers to maintain intense concentration.

Passenger movement plays a major role in overall safety. Standing passengers, walking while the bus is moving, or leaning into the aisle can shift weight unexpectedly and distract the driver. Even small disruptions can cause a driver to momentarily lose focus, especially in busy traffic or narrow suburban streets.

Visibility is another key factor. Drivers rely on mirrors and cameras, but blind spots still exist — particularly around the rear doors, the nearside of the bus, and directly behind the vehicle. This is why boarding and exiting safely, waiting for the bus to stop fully, and staying clear of the doors is essential.

Ultimately, bus and coach safety is a shared responsibility. Drivers are trained to operate large vehicles safely, but passengers play an equally important role by staying seated when possible, avoiding unnecessary movement, and respecting the driver’s need to focus. When everyone works together, the entire journey becomes safer for all.

Rail, Tram, and Level-Crossing Safety

Rail and tram networks operate with strict safety systems, but incidents can still occur when road users or pedestrians underestimate the speed, weight, and stopping distance of these vehicles. Unlike buses, trains and trams cannot swerve, and their braking capability is limited by steel wheels on steel rails. This means that even a small mistake near the tracks can have severe consequences.

Level crossings remain one of the highest-risk areas across Australia's transport network. Trains can approach faster and more quietly than many people expect, and once a driver applies the brakes, the train may still travel hundreds of meters before stopping. Ignoring warning lights, weaving around boom gates, or rushing across the tracks places not only the individual at risk but also passengers, crew, and nearby road users.

Trams present their own challenges in urban environments. They share space with cars, cyclists, and pedestrians, often operating in busy city centers where distractions are common. Because trams run on fixed tracks, any obstruction — even a vehicle stopped slightly over the line — can cause delays, collisions, or sudden braking that affects passengers inside the tram.

Pedestrian behavior is a major factor in tram and rail safety. Wearing headphones, looking at phones, or stepping onto the tracks without checking both directions are common contributors to near-misses. Modern trams are quiet, and their approach can be difficult to judge, especially in crowded areas.

Whether at a level crossing, tram stop, or rail station, the safest approach is always patience and awareness. Staying behind the yellow line, obeying signals, and never attempting to beat a train or tram protects everyone involved. Rail and tram operators work hard to maintain safe networks, but safety ultimately depends on the decisions made by the community around them.

Recent Public Transport Safety

Across Australia, several notable safety-related incidents and near-misses were reported throughout April and early May, highlighting the ongoing need for awareness, patience, and responsible behavior across all modes of public transport (Australian Transport Safety Bureau, 2026).

In New South Wales, multiple operators reported an increase in platform-edge incidents, with several passengers stepping beyond the yellow line while distracted by phones. Although no serious injuries occurred, transport authorities emphasized that even brief lapses in attention can place passengers dangerously close to moving trains and trams (Transport for NSW, 2026).

Victoria recorded a rise in boarding-related injuries on both buses and trams, particularly during peak-hour congestion. Most cases involved slips or falls when passengers attempted to board before the vehicle had fully stopped. Operators have since reinforced announcements reminding passengers to wait for doors to open completely before stepping forward (Public Transport Victoria, 2026).

Recent Public Transport Safety

In Queensland, several bus drivers reported near-misses involving pedestrians running across the road to catch services. These incidents occurred most frequently near busy interchanges and school zones. Drivers noted that sudden pedestrian movement can force heavy braking, increasing the risk of onboard injuries for standing passengers (TransLink Queensland, 2026).

Western Australia and South Australia both reported improvements in overall safety performance, with fewer collisions and onboard injuries compared to the previous quarter. Authorities attribute this to ongoing infrastructure upgrades, improved lighting at stops, and increased community engagement around safe travel behavior (WA Public Transport Authority, 2026; Department for Infrastructure and Transport SA, 2026).

While the majority of incidents nationwide were minor, they collectively highlight a consistent theme: most public transport safety risks stem from preventable behaviors. Staying alert, following signage, and allowing drivers the space to operate safely remain the most effective ways to reduce harm across the network (Australian Transport Safety Bureau, 2026).

FEATURE ANALYSIS: Emergency Transport Safety Technologies

Modern public transport systems rely on a wide range of safety technologies designed to prevent incidents, protect passengers, and support drivers during high-risk situations. While many of these systems operate quietly in the background, they play a critical role in keeping buses, trams, and trains safe across Australia's transport networks.

One of the most significant advancements in recent years has been the introduction of driver-assistance systems. These include lane-departure alerts, collision-warning sensors, blind-spot monitoring, and fatigue-detection cameras. Although these technologies do not replace the skill and judgement of a trained driver, they provide an additional layer of protection — especially during long shifts, congested traffic, or low-visibility conditions.

Emergency braking systems have also become increasingly common. On buses and trams, these systems use radar or optical sensors to detect obstacles and automatically apply the brakes if a collision is imminent. While not foolproof, they can significantly reduce the severity of an impact or prevent one entirely.

Inside the vehicle, passenger-safety technologies continue to evolve. Improved CCTV coverage helps drivers monitor movement throughout the cabin, while modern intercom and emergency-button systems allow passengers to quickly alert the driver to hazards. On coaches, seatbelt-reminder systems and rollover-strengthened structures provide additional protection during high-speed travel.

FEATURE ANALYSIS: Emergency Transport Safety Technologies

In the rail sector, advanced signaling systems and automated train protection technologies reduce the risk of human error by enforcing speed limits and preventing trains from entering occupied sections of track. These systems are critical in busy corridors where even a small mistake can have major consequences.

Despite these advancements, technology is only effective when paired with responsible behavior. Drivers still rely on passengers to remain seated, avoid distractions, and follow instructions during emergencies. Likewise, pedestrians and road users must respect warning signals, stay clear of tracks, and avoid risky behavior around level crossings. Emergency transport safety technologies continue to improve every year, but the most powerful safety tool remains the same: awareness. When technology, training, and community behavior work together, the entire transport network becomes safer for everyone.

Passenger Etiquette and Shared-Space Behviour

Public transport is a shared environment, and the way passengers behave has a direct impact on safety, comfort, and the overall experience for everyone on board. Whether travelling by bus, coach, tram, or train, small actions can make a significant difference in keeping the journey smooth and respectful.

One of the most important aspects of shared-space behavior is awareness. Passengers should remain mindful of their surroundings, avoid blocking aisles, and keep doorways clear during boarding and exiting. These areas are critical for safe movement, and even brief obstructions can delay services or create hazards during sudden stops.

Noise levels also play a major role in maintaining a safe environment. Loud conversations, music played without headphones, or disruptive behavior can distract the driver and disturb other passengers. Keeping noise to a reasonable level helps everyone travel more comfortably and allows the driver to focus on the road.

Respecting personal space is equally important. Public transport often becomes crowded, especially during peak times, and being considerate of others helps reduce tension. Wearing backpacks on the front, keeping belongings close, and offering seats to those who need them — such as elderly passengers, people with disabilities, or parents with young children — all contribute to a more inclusive and supportive environment.

Passenger Etiquette and Shared-Space Behavior

Cleanliness is another shared responsibility. Disposing of rubbish properly, avoiding food with strong smells, and keeping feet off seats ensures the vehicle remains pleasant for everyone. These small habits help maintain a professional and welcoming atmosphere across the network.

Ultimately, good passenger etiquette supports both safety and community wellbeing. When passengers show respect for each other and for the driver, the entire transport system operates more smoothly. A little courtesy goes a long way in creating a safer, calmer, and more enjoyable journey for all.



Safety Insight: Tram and Light Rail Safety

Tram and light-rail systems are designed to operate safely in busy urban environments, but their unique operating conditions require extra awareness from both passengers and the public. Unlike buses, trams run on fixed tracks and cannot swerve to avoid obstacles. This means that even small mistakes by pedestrians, cyclists, or motorists can lead to serious incidents.

One of the most common risks involves pedestrians stepping onto the tracks without checking for approaching trams. Modern trams are quiet, and their speed can be difficult to judge, especially in crowded city centers. Wearing headphones, looking at phones, or rushing across the tracks increases the likelihood of near-misses and collisions.
Staying behind marked lines and waiting for the tram to come to a complete stop is essential for safety.
Cyclists also face unique challenges around tram corridors. Tram tracks can trap bicycle wheels, especially when crossed at shallow angles.

This can cause sudden falls or force cyclists into the path of traffic. Dedicated bike-crossing points and crossing tracks at a right angle significantly reduce this risk.

Safety Insight: Tram and Light Rail Safety

For motorists, the key danger lies in misjudging tram movements. Trams often have priority at intersections, and their braking distance is far longer than a car's. Turning across tram tracks without checking for an oncoming vehicle is one of the leading causes of tram-car collisions. Obeying signals, avoiding stopping on tracks, and giving trams the right-of-way helps prevent these incidents.

Inside the tram, passenger behavior also plays a role. Standing passengers should hold onto rails, avoid leaning into doorways, and keep bags clear of aisles. Sudden braking can occur at any time, especially in busy traffic or when pedestrians step onto the tracks unexpectedly.

Tram and light-rail systems are among the safest transport modes in Australia, but their safety depends on predictable behavior from everyone around them. By staying alert, respecting signals, and understanding how trams operate, passengers and road users can help ensure a smooth and incident-free journey for all.

National Safety Statistics

Australia’s public transport network continues to demonstrate strong safety performance overall, with most incidents resulting from preventable human factors rather than mechanical failure. Data collected from state transport authorities and safety boards between January and March 2026 show encouraging trends in several key areas (Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications, 2026).

Across all modes, reported passenger injuries decreased by 12 percent compared to the same period in 2025. This improvement is largely attributed to increased awareness campaigns, better driver training, and infrastructure upgrades at high-risk locations such as bus stops and level crossings (Australian Transport Safety Bureau, 2026).

Bus-related incidents accounted for approximately 41 percent of all public transport safety reports nationwide. The majority involved minor slips, falls, or boarding accidents rather than collisions. Rail and tram incidents represented 37 percent, with most occurring at stations or crossings rather than onboard vehicles. The remaining 22 percent were linked to coach and long-distance operations, often involving fatigue or environmental factors such as poor visibility and wet conditions (National Road Safety Strategy, 2026).

National Safety Staistics

Fatalities across all public transport modes remain rare, with fewer than five recorded nationwide during the first quarter of 2026. While this figure reflects a high standard of operational safety, each case serves as a reminder of the importance of vigilance and respect for safety procedures (Australian Transport Safety Bureau, 2026).

The data also highlight a growing emphasis on community reporting. Over 2,000 public submissions were received through state safety portals, helping authorities identify recurring hazards and improve signage, lighting, and passenger-flow design (Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads, 2026).

Overall, the national trend continues to move in a positive direction. As technology advances and public awareness grows, Australia's transport safety record remains among the strongest in the world — a testament to the combined efforts of drivers, operators, and passengers alike (Department of Infrastructure, 2026).

SafeStops Australia Turns 1

As of May 22 2026 SafeStops-Australia has been around for 1 year! We thank everyone for the support over the past year and we look forward to what the future brings.

Stay safe, and keep others safe.

About SafeStops-Austrlia

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.

Disclaimer

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

Credits

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