

PTC PRESS

Public Transport Corporation staff magazine

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Safe travelling - on the drawing board

■ Customers, staff and the general public will be asked how to make public transport safer. The PTC's 'Safe Travelling Forum', currently on the drawing board, aims to stamp out violence on public transport with the help of the community.

Plans for the forum which will seek more active involvement from the community are underway in a bid to combat graffiti and vandalism, which often make people uncomfortable travelling on the system, and to develop and implement ways to make travelling safe.

Safety, particularly on metropolitan train services, has become an increasing concern among commuters especially on evening and late night services and around stations. The number of incidents reported in the media recently has illustrated the concern and highlighted the need for a more community minded and safety orientated public transport system.

The Resource Management Division's newly formed Protective Services Department will be a major player in getting the forum off the ground. The new department has been developed to create a central focus within the PTC to design and implement strategies aimed at providing a safer service, and assist the PTC in achieving its overall goals of providing a safe, clean and reliable transport system.

The first task of the Protective Services Department will be to gather all available information and statistics related to violence, graffiti and vandalism on the system.

The department will look at the Corporation's most important resources its 'front-line' staff and its customers for advice and opinions on the current state of the system and ideas on how to improve it.

It will also look to the future in identifying trends which could impact patronage. New strategies will be developed to counter-act these impacts and ensure the organisation is on target to provide the service which customers expect.

The draft framework for the forum is to consider: community attitudes to public

transport; social, financial and economic trends; education of transport users, present customers and future customers; and, communication systems between customers, the community and operators.

A properly managed and structured 'Safe Travelling Forum' presents the ideal opportunity to build a communication link between the service providers and the PTC's many client groups - staff, customers, action groups, and unions. This link will produce optimum results - a safer system.

For the forum to be credible, viable and produce results which are obvious throughout the system, the selection of representatives, to provide a cross-section of all the interested groups, participating in the forum will be a challenging task.

Currently it is thought that such a forum should comprise of representatives from: the PTC - management and staff; community groups; unions; Ministry of Transport; Trades Hall; and, Local Government.

Community representation needs to be acceptable and accessible to the community; non-political; capable of a professional rather than emotional approach, even though the topic lends itself to a high level of emotion; able to lend adequate time to the forum; and, able to provide access to the community.

Suggestions for community involvement in the forum have included action groups such as the Public Transport Users Association; a representative elected by the community; and, a relevant and credible 'media personality', who has a vested interest and can provide promotional support to the project.

If the idea of the forum is accepted as a productive and worthwhile initiative, it will be implemented as quickly as possible, enabling the PTC to move closer towards achieving a clean, safe and reliable service to the travelling public.

Already specific areas and issues have been identified and discussions are being encouraged on the ways we can, as an organisation achieve this goal. Ideas include promotion of the use of lit carriages at night and why this is safer; community stations, where staff are encouraged

to take an active role in promoting community participation in their station; and, the implementation of a 'safety spot' on station platforms where help phones, closed circuit TV and lighting are focused.

The forum hopes to provide a venue where ideas suggested by our staff and the community can be discussed, slotted in to existing programs, developed into new projects and strongly promoted throughout the community encouraging an interest in the service and more responsibility for personal safety.

It is proposed that the forum would meet monthly and the minutes would be easily accessible to all interested parties.

If you have any ideas you can forward your suggestions to Geoff Spring, Director Resource Management, level 15, 50 Market Street, Melbourne.

■ Stop Press ■

Apprentice of the year

Michelle Hines became the first female, and first sheet metal worker (1st class) to win the PTC's prestigious Apprentice of the Year Award, presented on Wednesday, August 8.

Michelle, based at Ballarat Workshops, was presented with her prize - and a congratulatory kiss on the cheek - by Chief Executive, Ian Stoney.

"Your future, our future, and the future of the Corporation is in your hands," Ian told the apprentices.

Details of the awards - next edition.

