



NO QUICK FIX
Is Justin Langer the right man for the job?
GOOD WEEKEND

FLINDERS FOUND
Remains of British explorer unearthed
INSIGHT



KVITOVA v OSAKA
The final without villains
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S A T U R D A Y
THE AGE

Published in Melbourne since 1854

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I N D E P E N D E N T . A L W A Y S .

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PUBLIC SAFETY Call to track crimes

Sex attacks on trains, trams surge

EXCLUSIVE

**Timna Jacks
Paul Sakkal**

Sexual offences on Victoria's public transport have surged by 60 per cent in three years, prompting calls for a public register that tracks reports of sex crimes and harassment on all train, tram and bus routes.

Days after the Productivity Commission reported that nearly a third of Victorians feel unsafe using public transport at night, *The Age* can reveal that reports of sexual crimes are on the rise across the entire network.

On Thursday, Police Minister Lisa Neville confirmed that police would deploy Protective Services Officers on tram routes with higher incidences of crime for the first time.

The move has been welcomed by PSOs, with two officers telling *The Age* they had pushed internally for more officers on the tram network, because trams at night were like

"rolling jungles". Melburnians attending a series of tearful vigils in the wake of the brutal killing of 21-year-old exchange student Ailia Maasarwe last week have called for safety improvements - including better lighting and more female PSOs - for women travelling alone at night.

Melbourne's central station, Flinders Street, was home to the highest number of assaults (127), between October 2017 and September 2018.

This was followed by the city's busiest station, Southern Cross (93), and two major suburban stations in Dandenong (49) and Footscray (28).

The number of sexual offences at train stations jumped by 70 per cent between 2015-16 and 2017-18, the latest data from the Crime Statistics Agency shows.

The number of sexual offences - which include groping, molesting and rape - rose from 82 to 141

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AUSTRALIANS OF THE YEAR



'They embody the very best of the Australian spirit'

Thai cave rescue divers Richard Harris and Craig Challen have been honoured.

Young Australian of the Year
Senior Australian of the Year
Local hero
PAGES 10-11

Honour roll
8-PAGE LIFTOUT

Dana McCauley

Cave rescue divers Richard "Harry" Harris and Craig Challen have both been named 2019 Australian of the Year for their heroic efforts in saving 12 boys from a flooded cave in Thailand.

In July 2018, Adelaide anaesthetist Dr Harris and retired vet Dr Challen, from Perth, made worldwide headlines when they joined an international team to rescue a group of boys and their soccer coach from the flooded cave in Chiang Rai.

It is the first time the Australia

Day Council has bestowed the honour on two state or territory finalists at once, reflecting the extraordinary achievement of the long-time friends and diving buddies.

Danielle Roche, chairwoman of the National Australia Day Council, praised the pair for their "selflessness, courage and willingness to help others in a time of need".

"Richard Harris and Craig Challen led a heroic rescue under the spotlight of the world's media. They placed the safety of others above their own and inspired hope when hope seemed lost," Ms Roche said.

Their decision to risk their lives "typifies the Australian spirit".

"They embody the very best of the Australian spirit - a commitment to improving the lives of others, a determination to succeed and the ability to inspire us to think about how we can contribute to our nation," she said.

"They are the people that make us proud to be Australian."

Before learning he had won the top honour, Dr Harris said being recognised as a finalist was "a completely unexpected result" from

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