

A month of assault and abuse highlights need to keep transport staff safe

Categories : [RTBU News](#)

Date : 20 July, 2014

The NSW Rail, Tram and Bus Union is calling on the Baird Government to address failing security on the state's transport network after the Union has received more than 65 incident reports in just one month.

RTBU NSW Secretary Alex Claassens said the Transport Minister must take action and introduce measures to ensure safety after staff came forward with reports of physical attacks, sexual assaults, attempted robberies, abuse, vandalism and workers being spat on.

Last month the RTBU launched the *Keep Us Safe* campaign and urged its members to report safety incidents to an online log.

Since then, there have been reports of: 16 staff members assaulted, female staff sexually assaulted and harassed, 24 cases of abuse and violent threats and nine cases of staff being victim of spitting incidents.

In many of the incidents reported passengers and bystanders were also victim to physical attacks and assaults, racial abuse and attempted armed robbery.

There was also numerous examples of passengers under the influence of alcohol and drugs, public urination and reports of vandalism and graffiti – in one example youths interfered with rail infrastructure to hold up a train for it to be spray painted.

“Train drivers and guards should be focusing on their job, not worrying about an intoxicated passenger trying to push a flaming newspaper into their cabin to set the train alight, as was reported in one incident,” Mr Claassens said.

“Female staff should not have to turn up to their workplace and be in fear of being sexually assaulted or harassed because some lowlife knows there is no security around.

“It seems most bus drivers can recall being spat on and train station staff abused for doing their job – and this is simply not on.

“The Government owes our members a safe workplace and the travelling public a secure journey,

and this is not what is occurring since the Transport Minister slashed security – replacing Transit Officers with fewer Police officers.

“The Police have struggled to fill their complement and as a result there is a serious security deficit across the network. The 600 Transit Officers who worked exclusively on the trains have been replaced by just 400 Police officers who work across trains, buses, light rail and ferries.

“Other cuts to the CCTV monitoring positions and stripping transport workers of car parking are exacerbating the growing security concerns for transport workers.”

Mr Claassens said a recent NRMA report, which highlighted security as the number one concern for commuters for a second year in a row, was clear evidence of the Government’s ongoing failure.

Media contact: Alex Claassens 0419 219 309, Olivia Greentree 0439 411 774