

## **‘Covid marshals’ needed to enforce public transport regulations, says union**

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# MEDIA RELEASE



The Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) NSW is demanding a new safety position and all-of-network approach to public transport from the NSW Government during Covid, with looming staff cuts because of Bus privatisation and reduced safety roles on InterCity trains threatening to take safety backwards at a crucial time for public health.

After the emergence of new Covid cases using the public transport network, the union is calling on the government to hire Covid marshals to enforce physical distancing regulations on trains, buses, and trams, strengthen its messaging on the need for commuters to wear masks.

RTBU NSW Secretary Alex Claassens said the government must introduce Covid marshals whose responsibility it is to monitor and enforce regulations on public transport.

“The state government has introduced a raft of measures for public transport without the means to enforce them,” says Mr Claassens. “Passenger limits and green dots are good measures, but there are no additional staff to ensure people follow the rules.

“Cutting jobs and privatising the public transport network have long been this government’s game, but it’s continued under cover of Covid to the extreme detriment of the people of this state.

“Removing the safety role from guards from InterCity trains is a catastrophic move, especially now when they are such an asset in promoting best practice among the travelling public. A pandemic is not the time to be axing jobs and stripping safety responsibilities from transport staff. Not when transport is so crucial to protecting public health.

“Commuters simply must wear masks when physical distancing isn’t possible. Common sense should dictate that the message needs to be clear, We want people on Public Transport to wear masks and more resources need to be put towards advertising and promoting best practice among the public and if necessary enforcing that.

“The NSW Government must pick up its game and develop a long-term plan for protecting public health across all our public transport services – one that doesn’t involve cutting staff, giving advice and hoping for the best.”