

Improving safety for women and girls on public transport

November 10 2021



Credit: Monash University

A major collaborative research project between La Trobe University, Monash University's XYX Lab, and RMIT has today released a series of gender-sensitive [Toolkits](#) to improve the safety of women and girls on

public transport.

The State Government-funded TramLab research brought together pioneering research expertise in violence against [women](#); gender, space and design; and technology-facilitated [sexual violence](#) and harassment, to investigate the issues and factors impacting on [safety](#) and perceptions of safety for women and [girls](#) on Victorian public [transport](#).

The research found that despite women's use and experience of public transport being different from men's, this fact and women and girls' widespread safety fears are seldom considered in service delivery. Encouragingly, the research also indicates a strong commitment to improving safety for women and girls across the sector.

A resulting series of four toolkits covering gender-sensitive communication campaigns, placemaking, gender-sensitive data collection and training for service providers and security staff, provides a blueprint for action—particularly timely as Victorians emerge out of lockdown.

The research was funded by the Victorian Government to help inform its work towards improving safety for women on public transport.

La Trobe Project Chair Professor Angela Taft—a world-leading expert on gender-based violence—said now more than ever it is essential to address the critical issue of women's safety on public transport.

"Through this important project, drawing on expertise from across industry and universities, we have engaged women and girls in co-designing and contributing to new solutions in public transport. If an over-arching gender sensitive policy framework can be developed and the recommended actions in the toolkits implemented, they will significantly help to prevent and reduce women and girls' experiences of

sexual harassment and assault."

Associate Professor Nicole Kalms is expert in designing for the safety of women and girls in public spaces and directs the Monash University's XYX Lab. As research coordinator of the Tramlab project Kalms said that fear of male violence significantly limits the freedom and participation of women and girls in community life, and that this is particularly heightened in relation to the use of public transport.

"This research explored the gendered nature of safety, design and spaces and the Toolkits provide practical, gender-sensitive solutions for action on these issues."

The researchers hope that the toolkits, aimed at the general public, government and public transport providers, policymakers and stakeholders, will raise awareness of the structural, attitudinal, behavioral and spatial factors that influence women and girls safety on public transport in Victoria and beyond.

Outcomes from their use will be far-reaching, with application beyond tram routes in applying a gender lens to transport planning and urban design nationally and internationally.

About the toolkits:

[Toolkit 1: Communication Campaigns](#)

Lays out the steps for developing gender-sensitive communication campaigns. The Toolkit includes sample communication campaigns that can be drawn upon to achieve behavioral change to reduce and prevent violence against women and girls.

[Toolkit 2: Placemaking](#)

Details the process for engaging gender-sensitive placemaking to enhance safety for women and girls using public transport. The Toolkit includes resources to help designers, planners and decision makers to create safer, more inclusive and accessible cities.

[Toolkit 3: Data](#)

Details the steps for gathering gender-sensitive data for transport spaces. Such data is needed in order to determine the true scale and to monitor trends in sexual violence and harassment against women and girls on public transport, which is largely unknown to providers.

[Toolkit 4: Training](#)

Outlines the implementation of gender-sensitive training for public transport service providers and aligned security staff. The [toolkit](#) includes practical resources and a [gender](#) sensitive curriculum that promotes long term behavioral change for those working in [public transport](#) such as Public Service Officers, front-line staff, managers and decision makers.

Provided by La Trobe University

Citation: Improving safety for women and girls on public transport (2021, November 10) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-11-safety-women-girls.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.