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Media Release

Respect Victoria launches campaign for commuters to call out sexual harassment on public transport

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Respect Victoria has today launched its first campaign urging Victorians to 'call out' sexual harassment.

Developed in consultation with key representatives from across the family violence and behaviour change sectors, the campaign is designed to bring all Victorians into the conversation around sexual harassment on public transport by providing the tools to call out inappropriate behaviours before they escalate.

Following the success of the Victorian State Government's first Respect Women: 'Call It Out' campaign, launched in March 2018; this next phase of the campaign focuses on encouraging bystander action when safe to do so, on public transport.

"Personal safety in public spaces is everyone's business and every traveller and commuter has the right to reach their destination safely," said Respect Victoria Chair, Melanie Eagle.

Around two million passengers a day use Victoria's trains, trams and buses. The latest data from the Crime Statistics Agency shows that between 2015-16 and 2017-18, the number of sexual offences at train stations jumped by 70 per cent, with the number of reported sexual offences - including groping, molesting and rape - rising from 82 to 141 across all train stations. The number of reported sexual offences on trains, trams and buses rose by 60 per cent, from 210 to 332. Reported assaults on buses and bus stops specifically increased by about 25 per cent to 257, while assaults on trams and tram stops rose by 19 per cent to 129.

Speaking at today's campaign launch, the Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, The Hon. Gabrielle Williams noted that even the smallest of acts can potentially stop sexual harassment from occurring. "It's easy to tune out during rush hour. But it's good to stay present and be aware of other commuters. We all have a role to play in calling out sexual harassment," Minister Williams said.

The campaign runs from Sunday 7 April 2019 and includes a mix of regional and metropolitan television advertising, digital and social media advertising, outdoor advertising (including commercials across all metropolitan city loop stations) and regional and metropolitan press advertising.

For more information on the campaign and how to get involved, visit www.respectvictoria.vic.gov.au

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Quotes attributable to The Hon. Gabrielle Williams, Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence:

“We know that evidence-based prevention campaigns work, and we know we can change the mindset of a community and the harmful behaviours and attitudes that can lead to family violence and violence against women.”

“Building community awareness of the drivers of all forms of family violence and violence against women, contributes to cultural change and challenges these drivers – together we can create a Victoria free from violence.”

Quotes attributable to Respect Victoria Chair, Melanie Eagle:

“Changing norms, practices and structures to prevent family violence and violence against women is the challenge of a generation. It is one that Victoria has made a historic investment in and is now the responsibility of Respect Victoria to lead.”

Respect Victoria’s Chair, Melanie Eagle, and Chief Executive Officer, Tracey Gaudry, are available for comment and interview.

For interview requests, please contact Respect Victoria’s Media and Campaigns Manager, Luke Butler on 0438 113 403 or via email at luke.butler@respectvictoria.vic.gov.au