

Media Release

The Hon Ben Carroll MP

Minister for Industry and Innovation
Minister for Manufacturing Sovereignty
Minister for Employment
Minister for Public Transport



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KEEPING TRAMS ON THEIR TRACKS AS COLLISIONS RISE

The Andrews Labor Government is urging motorists to drive safely around trams, as the number of serious vehicle-to-tram collisions rise across Melbourne.

Minister for Public Transport Ben Carroll today visited the Yarra Trams' Collision Repair Centre at the new Preston Depot – where a number of trams have been taken off their tracks to undergo major repair works following a collision with a vehicle.

There were 960 vehicle-to-tram collisions recorded in 2022, with 166 of them classified as serious. It's a jump of 60 per cent on the previous year, equating to an average of almost three collisions a day.

In January this year, there were 10 vehicle-to-tram collisions in one day, prompting a call for motorists to share the road safely with trams and to never drive in the path of a moving tram.

Most collisions involving trams occur when a vehicle turns in front of a tram or drives on to tracks attempting to overtake others. Around 95 per cent of tram-to-vehicle collisions are caused by vehicles on the tracks.

Vehicle-to-tram collisions can cause major damage to trams and vehicles, as well as injuries and fatal consequences to those involved.

Clearing a collision can also take hours, leading to disruptions for all road users and often extending journeys across multiple routes and roads.

There are 10 trams out of service for collision repairs at any one time on average - about half of one route's trams that are unavailable for service.

Melbourne's trams weigh up to 62 tonnes – or about as much as 30 rhinos – and while some vehicle-to-tram collisions are minor, other collisions require major work by a skilled team at the Preston Depot to bring the trams back into service.

The team complete varied tasks to safely return the trams on their tracks, including panel beating and electrical works.

Trams with more significant damage, such as Z-class tram number 123 which was side-swiped by a garbage truck in late 2022, can take many months to repair.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Public Transport Ben Carroll

"Melbourne's tram network is essential to keeping locals and tourists moving – so when serious vehicle-to-tram collisions occur, it can cause lengthy disruptions and result in the trams requiring major repair works for a long period of time."

"We know the network is shared with other road users and we want to keep it safe – so we're urging motorists to take extra care when driving around trams and drive down the number of vehicle-to-tram collisions."

Media contact: Sarah Vanin 0410 982 745 | sarah.vanin@minstaff.vic.gov.au

Quotes attributable to Member for Northcote Kat Theophanous

“We’re seeing far too many serious vehicle-to-tram collisions on our network – forcing a number of trams to be taken off their tracks to undergo major repairs at the Preston Depot.”

“We’re asking motorists to stay alert around trams, share the road safely and to never drive in the path of a moving tram.”

Quotes attributable to Yarra Trams Acting Chief Executive Adele McCarthy

“We’ve integrated global best practice from across the world to streamline the repair process for our trams.”

“Keeping a large and diverse fleet of trams on the network is no easy task, especially when repairing damaged trams is so labour-intensive, but we’re keeping Melbourne moving even in challenging circumstances.”