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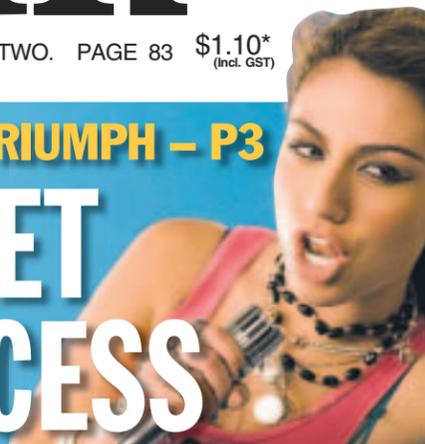
FORECAST: SHOWER OR TWO. PAGE 83 \$1.10* (incl. GST)



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**MOVIES
& MUSIC**



CILMI'S TRIUMPH – P3
**SWEET
SUCCESS**



Louie the llama hits town

Heads turned as Louie the llama brought a touch of outback Peru to Melbourne's Southbank yesterday. Led along by Alysha Harris and Jake Earl, Louie will be one of the stars of the Royal Show, which starts next Thursday. Picture: JAY TOWN

FEAR GRIPS RAILS

More danger here than in London or New York

PUBLIC transport users in Victoria are more likely to be attacked than commuters in New York, London or Sydney.

Assaults, sex offences, robberies and thefts soared last year, police figures show. While public transport crime was up 2.5 per cent, transit police insiders say squad numbers have dropped to a new low of less than 200.

The Hurstbridge train line was rated worst for crime, followed by Frankston, Pakenham and Lilydale.

The shock figures come amid a fresh outbreak of violent crime on Melbourne's transit system.

A woman was stabbed and sexually assaulted on a train between North Melbourne and Southern Cross Station yesterday afternoon.

It was the latest in a spate of attacks on women over the past two months, including the bashing of a mentally handicapped woman on the Frankston line.

And in the Supreme Court yesterday, a dug user was jailed for 22 years for the stabbing murder of a stranger on the Belgrave line in 2006.

While transit crime in Victoria went up last year, New York's subway crime rate went down by 13 per cent, and London Tube crime dropped 11 per cent.

Mary Bolling

public transport reporter

A *Herald Sun* investigation shows: **TRANSIT** crime in Victoria was double that of NSW: 9559 incidents to 4766.

NEW YORK'S subway averages just 6.5 felonies a day, while 26 crimes are committed daily on Victorian public transport — almost five a day involving violence.

LONDON'S Underground, which carries more than double Victoria's passenger numbers, recorded a much lower rate of sex offences.

Public Transport Users Association president Daniel Bowen said transit police and station staff levels dictated the level of crime.

Melbourne has 105 stations without staff, 73 fully staffed, and 31 manned for peak periods.

"Both New York and London have a big police presence and a staff presence at all their stations, even at night," he said.

A spokesman for Public Transport Minister Lynne Kosky said seven more stations were being upgraded to "premium stations" this year, to be manned by staff from first to last train. But Mr Bowen said the changes were at "glacial pace".

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Random killer's 17-year jail term angers family

Murderer off 'light'

Shelley Hadfield

THE family of a young dad murdered on a suburban train say the minimum 17-year jail term handed to his killer is too light.

Cory James Acuna, 26, could be out of jail when he is just 40.

A chronic drug user, Acuna stabbed musician Darren Jones, 28, on a Belgrave line train in February, 2006.

The pair had never met. Justice Paul Coghlan said the murder was random and "entirely pointless".

"Mr Jones was an innocent person who was defenceless and taken by surprise," he said.

Justice Coghlan sentenced Acuna to 22 years' jail, with a non-parole period of 17 years.

He has already spent almost two years and seven months on remand.

"Your offending brings into sharp focus the vulnerability of those who depend upon public transport," Justice Coghlan said.

He said three months before the murder, Acuna told a community corrections officer: "I just feel like killing somebody."

When asked who, he replied: "Anybody, random."

Mr Jones' brother-in-law, Ray Seamer, said he was disappointed with the sentence, saying the family had hoped for at least 25 years.

"I just reckon that sucks to be honest. That's nowhere near enough," Mr Seamer said.



Darren Jones

"You can't change what's happened to us. We have got to deal with that for the rest of our lives of course, (but) we want justice.

"He's not a stable person. He could get out and do it to someone else."

Mr Seamer said the Australian legal system was too weak.

"I would hope he would be locked away forever — someone like that should not be allowed in public."

Mr Seamer said the sentence came just days after Mr Jones' son Jett, 4, had to go through another Father's Day without his dad.

"We have done everything possible to make sure he knows who his dad was.

"He knows what's happened. He copes and goes day to day."

Mr Jones was reading on the train when Acuna, who was sitting opposite, stood up, took a large knife from his

pants and stabbed him three times in the chest.

The attack was captured on security footage.

Mr Jones picked up his guitar and walked from the train at Box Hill station.

He collapsed and died on the platform from a wound that pierced his rib, lung and heart.

Acuna, who has 30 prior convictions, was arrested at the station.

He pleaded not guilty to murder, claiming his actions in attacking Mr Jones were not conscious or voluntary because he was suffering delusions.

The jury heard he claimed Mr Jones owed him money and had made a racist remark towards him.

Acuna, of Kilsyth, had used cannabis for half his life and injected amphetamines the night before the attack.

Justice Coghlan said the jury rejected the claim that Acuna was suffering a serious psychiatric illness.

He said it did not seem possible to say that Acuna was suffering from an acute psychotic episode but there was a degree of psychosis which, in part, provided one explanation for the crime.

Mr Jones' partner Kate Salisbury and his parents sat through the trial but were not at yesterday's sentence.

"Those close to Darren Jones, a very loving family man and musician who was just setting out on his career, are inconsolable," Justice Coghlan said.



Devastated: Darren Jones' sister Jessica yesterday.

Boffins crank up doom machine

IF you are reading this, you are not dead.

Particle physicists fired up the world's biggest atom-smasher last night in a mission to answer some of the most perplexing questions about the universe.

Built in a tunnel 100m below ground in a complex straddling the French-Swiss border, the Large Hadron Collider is designed to accelerate sub-atomic particles to nearly the speed of light and smash them together.

The collisions will briefly stoke temperatures 100,000 times hotter than the sun, fleetingly replicating conditions that prevailed in split-seconds after the Big Bang that created the universe 13.7 billion years ago.

Before the start-up, internet-driven rumours said the LHC could create deadly black holes or a nasty hypothetical particle called a strangelet that would gobble up the planet.

But so far, so good. In this seething primordial soup, novel particles may lurk.

Discovering them could resolve mysteries clouding our understanding of how matter is constituted and came into being, scientists say.

"It's about acquiring knowledge for humanity about the behaviour of fundamental matter," physicist Daniel Denegri said.

"We expect to make discoveries that could be rather spectacular."

Shortly after 5.30pm, the first protons were injected into the 27km ring-shaped tunnel at the headquarters of the European Organisation for Nuclear Research.

It has required nearly two decades, \$6.6 billion and 5000 scientists, engineers and technicians from nearly three dozen countries to bring the collider to fruition.

Yesterday's operation began a long and cautious commissioning process, testing equipment and procedures, before starting experiments a matter of weeks from now.

In the control room, relieved scientists cheered and clapped when the first particles completed a maiden, clockwise lap around the ring.

When all is ready, the collider will whiz two beams, one clockwise and the other anticlockwise, around the tunnel.

Superconducting magnets cooled close to absolute zero — the chill of deep space — will then steer the beams so that they converge inside four chambers whose walls are swathed with detectors.

When protons collide, sub-atomic wreckage from the smash will fly into the detectors, leaving a calling-card trace of their identity.

The Holy Grail would be finding a particle, called the Higgs Boson after British physicist Peter Higgs, who devised the theory of its existence in 1964.

DeGeneres shares joy

US TV talkshow host Ellen DeGeneres has shared never-before seen photos and video footage of her wedding to Australian actor Portia de Rossi.

DeGeneres called it "one of the best experiences I've had".

Speaking on her show of the August 16 wedding at their \$36 million Beverly Hills estate, she also revealed film of her breathless reaction to de Rossi as the 35-year-old actor emerged in a plunging halter-neck dress.

"You look beautiful. Oh my God," she exclaimed.

SAFETY ON THE LINE Crime rates on public transport (per passenger trip)



Fear grips our rail network

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Connex has 350 authorised officers patrolling the system.

But customer service general manager Geoff Young said they could not be expected to deal with the worst crimes.

"My staff aren't police — station staff and line staff are trained to calm situations without putting themselves in danger."

Previously required by its contract with the Brumby Government to patrol a minimum number of kilometres after 7pm, Connex changed the arrangement in February so its officers share their time more evenly between carriages and platforms.

Mr Young said a new program focusing on crime hotspots was making an impact on safety, with suburban train crime down 30 per cent in the first six months of the new scheme.

"The problems on Hurstbridge were due to a lot of rock throwing during the school holidays, which we were then able to target. It's a good indication of how quickly issues move and change," he said.

Victoria's annual public transport crime figures, compared to London and NSW

Location	Robberies	Homicide / assaults	Sexual offences	Car theft	Theft from cars	Total crimes	Total passenger trips
Victoria	349	1234	210	1166	1907	9559	470 million
NSW	326	1329	176	101	266	4766	600 million
London Tube	192	2215	332	na	na	16,445	1 billion

Source: Victoria Police figures for 2007/08; NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics for 2007; British Transport Police figures for 2007/08
HK/Herald Sun 11/9/08

He said another good example was the Lilydale line, where increased patrols from 3pm had reduced the number of crimes against school children.

Crime reports on the line have dropped from 650 to 240 in the two six-month blocks to July.

While some lines have improved, Mr Young said crime had increased on the Pakenham line, while the Frankston line jumped to

second worst for crime. Opposition public transport spokesman Terry Mulder said less than 200 transit police was not enough.

"With Melbourne's train lines stretching for up to 58km from Flinders St, many of the 211 stations are lonely places," he said.

"Women and senior citizens can feel threatened, even during the day, if gangs roam around unchecked."

Frankston MP Inga Peulich said scores of locals had approached her office with concerns about crime on lonely platforms.

She said unmanned stations, as well as delayed and cancelled trains forcing longer waiting times, meant people felt more vulnerable as crimes became more common.

Seven of the 10 stations between Parkdale and Frankston are unmanned.

Sex fiend strikes

POLICE were last night looking for a knife attacker after a woman was stabbed and sexually assaulted on a moving suburban train.

Passengers at Southern Cross station were shocked to see the distressed woman get off a train at 4pm.

She told police she was on a north-bound service when she was stabbed and sexually assaulted near North Melbourne station.

She caught another train back to the city, bleeding from a wound near her neck.

She was last night with sexual offences investigators after her injuries were treated.

Witnesses said she arrived, bloodied, at Southern Cross station in Spencer St, where she spoke to staff who called emergency services.

Promotional worker Crystal Kimber said the shocked woman was seen by many passing commuters.

"They (staff) got her a chair. Within five minutes the police and ambulance were there," Ms Kimber said.

Anyone with information can call Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.