



**CITY OF MELBOURNE**



Dear Melbourne public transport employee –

I am one of many people currently engaged in a peaceful act of civilly disobedient protest against Public Transport Victoria and its subsidiaries. This protest consists of purposely boycotting fares on Melbourne trains, trams and busses.

The aim of this leaflet is to explain the reasons why this action is being taken.

In July of this year, a 15-year-old girl was picked up and spear-tackled by a male Metro ticket inspector at Flinders Street Station. This is only one of numerous acts of unnecessary, indefensible abuse and assault committed by Public Transport Authorised Officers against PT users over recent years, but it represents the end of the line for the current, grotesquely dysfunctional system of fare enforcement.

The young woman assaulted at Flinders St Station in July lives in residential care under the guardianship of an organisation that cares for some of the state's most vulnerable children, who cannot live at home due to family neglect and abuse.

The girl has been charged with assault after allegedly slapping the authorised officer in the face, shortly after he grabbed her from behind. Anglicare Victoria chief executive Paul McDonald said the girl was "visibly traumatised" the day after her arrest and that Metro had erred in defending its authorised officers' use of force. "That is a message to all the other members of Metro that they can act like this, where the force was clearly over-physical, heavy-handed and quite appalling," he said.

A Transport Department investigation has found the officers involved acted "appropriately". Metro has defended the actions of the authorised officer who body-slammed the girl. They - unlike their victim - have not been subject to any criminal charges.

All of this sets a very nasty precedent which leaves members of the public in danger of serious harm or even death, for no more than a few dollars. It is an attempt to justify violence against the most vulnerable of society, and it is not acceptable.

As such, I will not be paying to use public transport in Melbourne until the Authorised Officer primarily responsible is dismissed and charged with assault, and PTV and Metro apologise unconditionally for this reprehensible act of violence, and for publically condoning it.

You can send me a fine if you like. I won't be paying it.

Stop Authorised Officers assaulting passengers on Melbourne public transport. And stop condoning them when they do.