

# A GENDERED PERSPECTIVE ON PERSONAL SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION JOURNEYS

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“Globally, up to 95% of women have experienced some form of unwanted sexual behaviour on public transport.” - TramLAB, LaTrobe university

**Explore personal safety experience of women rail passengers in Melbourne**

**Understand how harassment experiences shape long-term travel behaviour**

# Agenda

Introduction

Survey Approach

Survey Results

Modelling Results



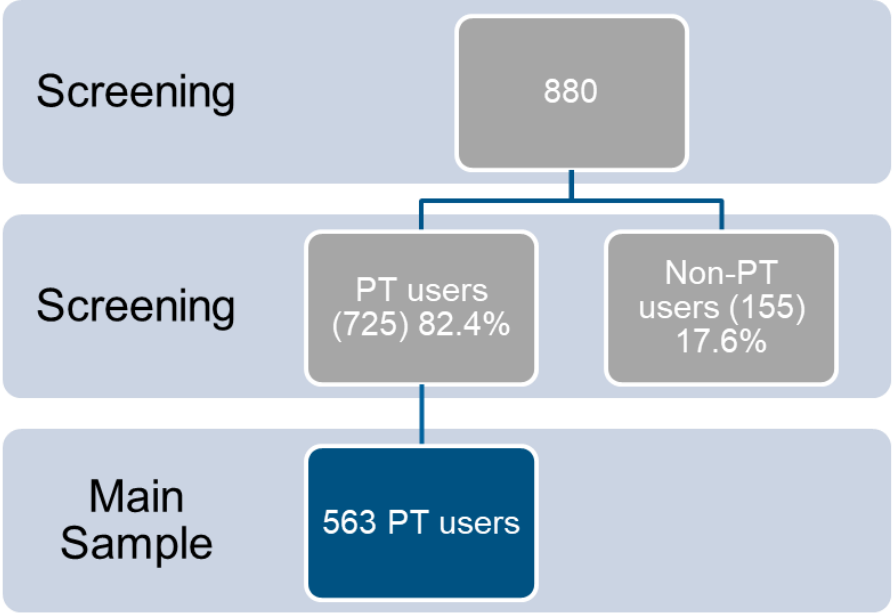
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The online survey aims to understand personal safety experience and rail user priorities for safety mitigations of women and gender diverse passengers; This presentation only focuses on **Women users**.



Primary research question

*How women and gender-diverse rail users feel about their personal safety when travelling with public transport in Melbourne?*

- Panel – based online survey (n=500)
- Women & GD rail users\* (6%) in Melbourne >18 years
- October 2024

	Women	Gender-diverse	TOTAL
Target Sample	470	30	500
Outcome	<b>528</b>	34	563
% Target Achieved	112%	113%	113%

\*Victorian Government (2023) *Pride in our future: Victoria's LGBTIQ+ strategy 2022-32 - LGBTIQ+ communities*. Available at: <https://www.vic.gov.au/pride-in-our-future-victorias-lgbtqi-strategy-2022-32/lgbtiq-communities> (Accessed: 13 December 2024).

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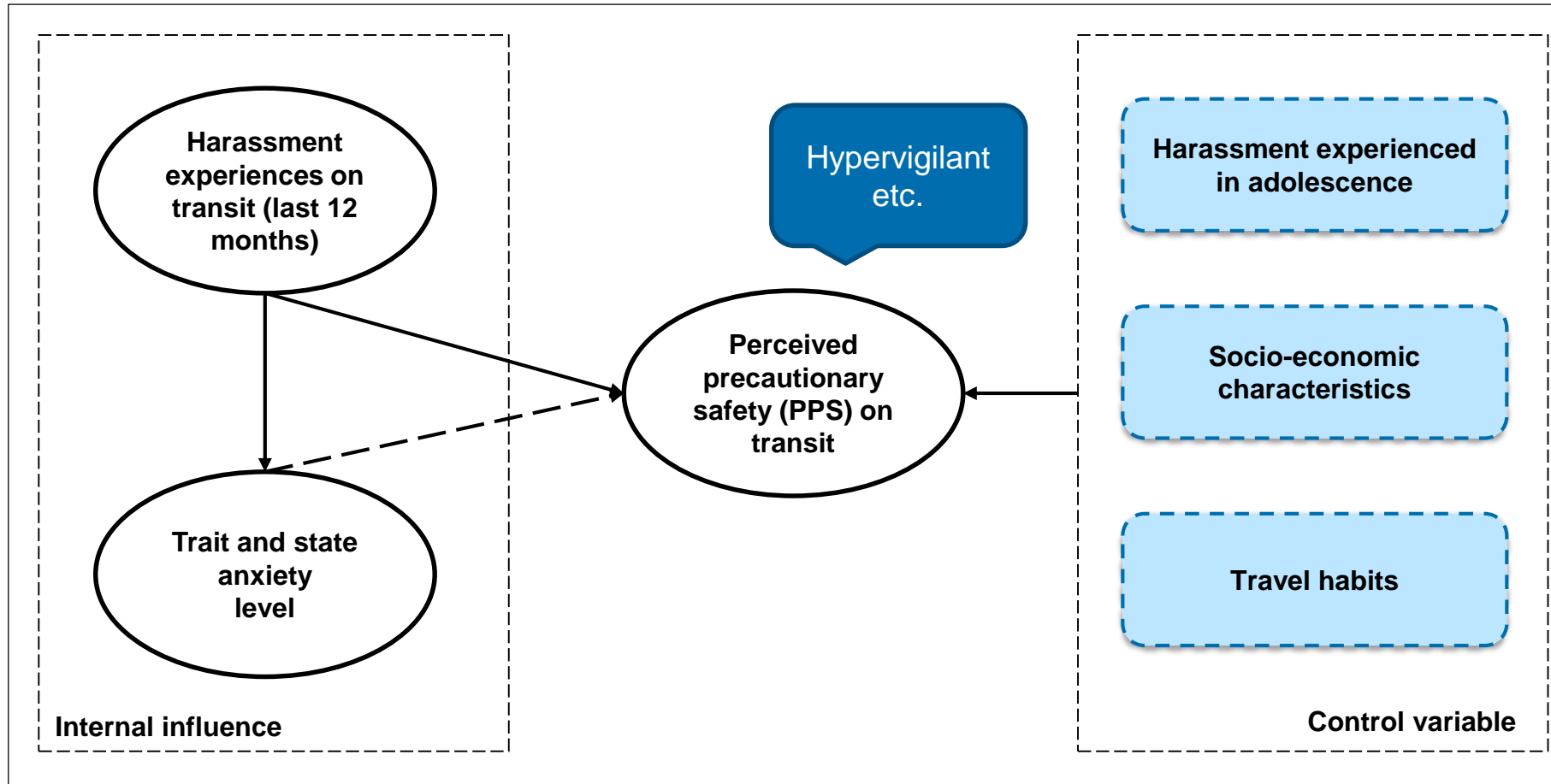
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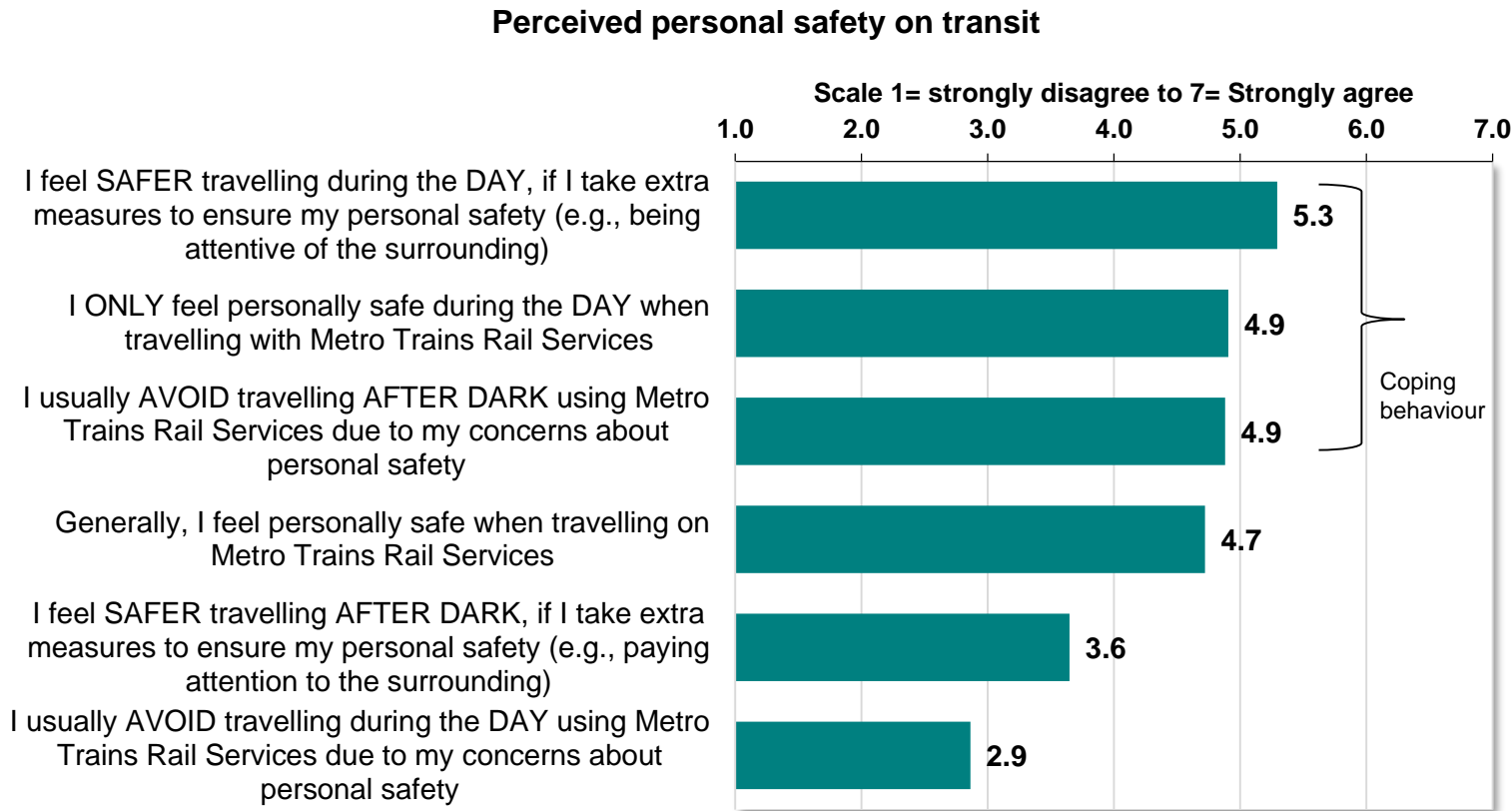
This conceptual framework integrated “Street harassment index” and “State-trait Anxiety Scale (STAI)” to explore perceived personal safety of the women rail users. The model was estimated using Structural Equation Model (SEM).



### Hypotheses

- PPS is directly related to harassment experience.
- Harassment experience can affect individual's state and personality traits and results into precautionary behaviour.
- Harassment experience in adolescence (aged under 18) can contribute to adaptive transit coping behaviour in adulthood.
- Analysed effects of control variables (e.g., rail use frequency, mode use, age, education, income, etc.)

The results shows that generally women feel safer on rail when they take “Perceived Precautionary Safety (PPS)”.



Source:

- Monash Female and Gender Diverse Rail User Survey, October 2024



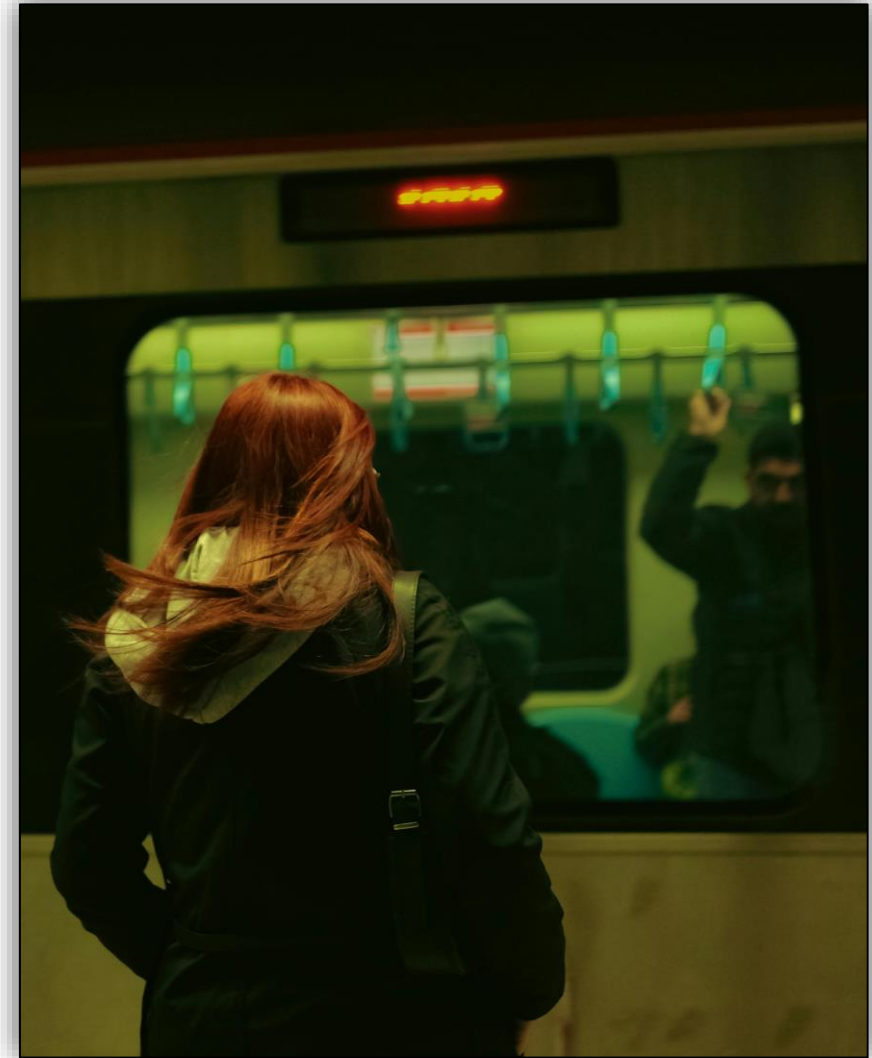
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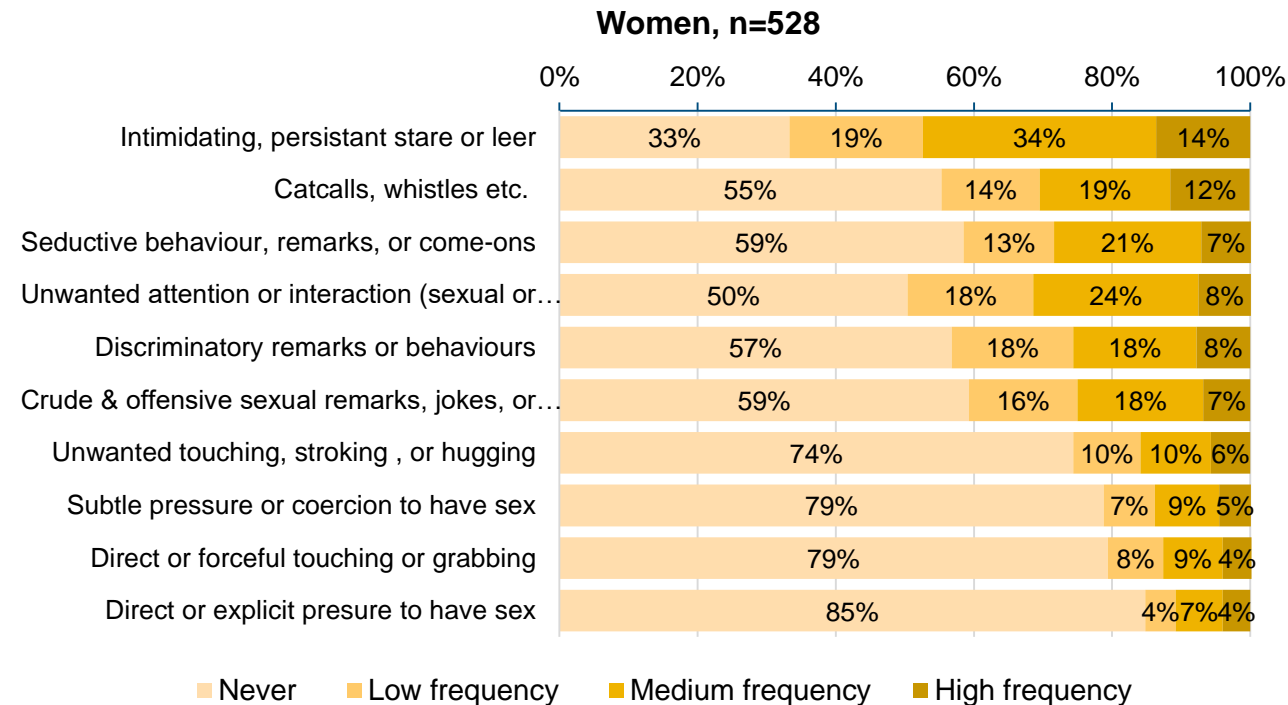
Note:

Q13 To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statement on your perceived personal safety (e.g., fear of crime, anti-social behavior) while travelling by Metro Trains Rail Services?

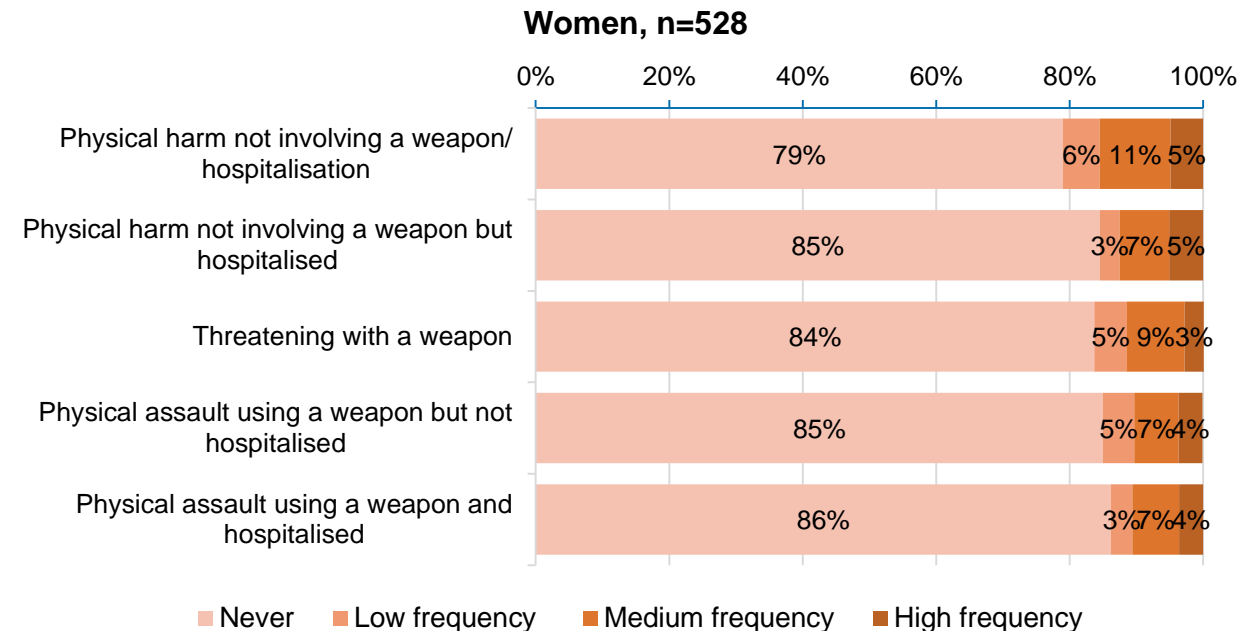


**Frequent intimidating stares dominate women harassment experience; 1 in 25 Women users note direct/explicit sex pressure. Most (79-94%) don't experience serious harassment. But at least 16% experienced physical assault on PT of some kind and were hospitalised at least once.**

### Personal Harassment (last 12 months)



### Serious Physical Assault (last 12 months)



Source:

- Monash Female and Gender Diverse Rail User Survey, October 2024



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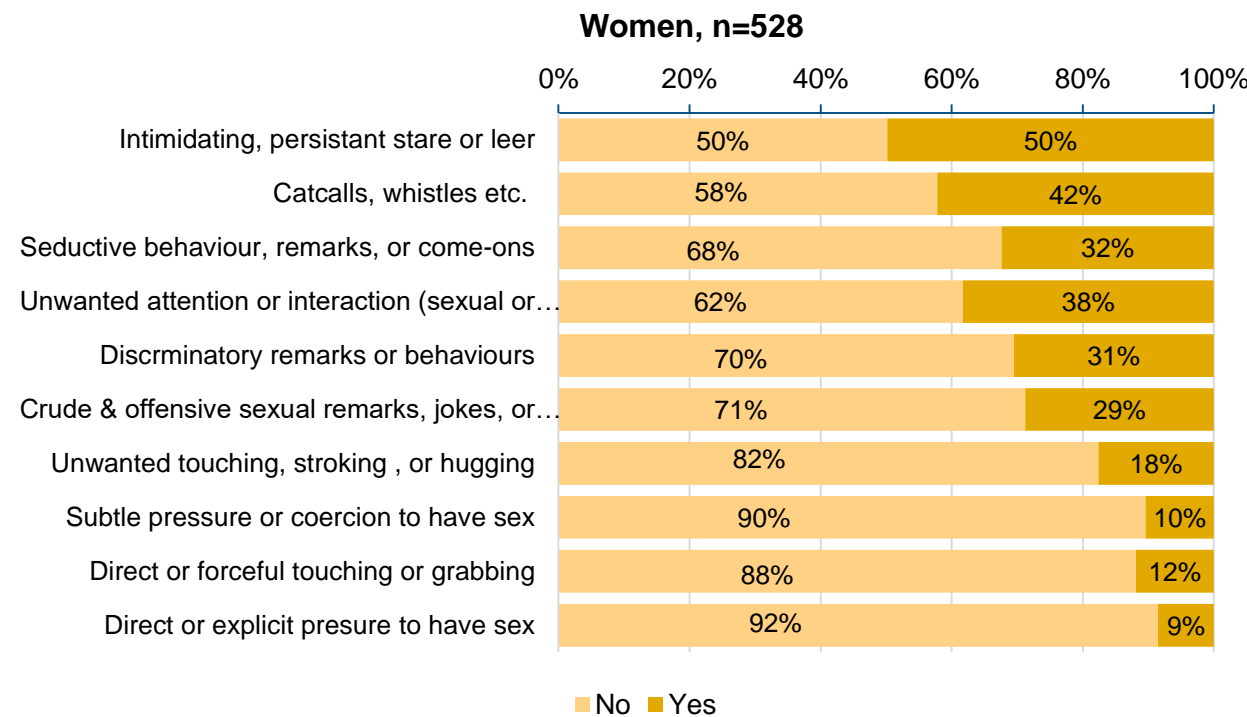
Note:

QA1 Reflecting on the LAST 12 MONTHS, please rate how frequently have you PERSONALLY experienced these behaviours from a STRANGER while travelling by Metro Trains Rail;

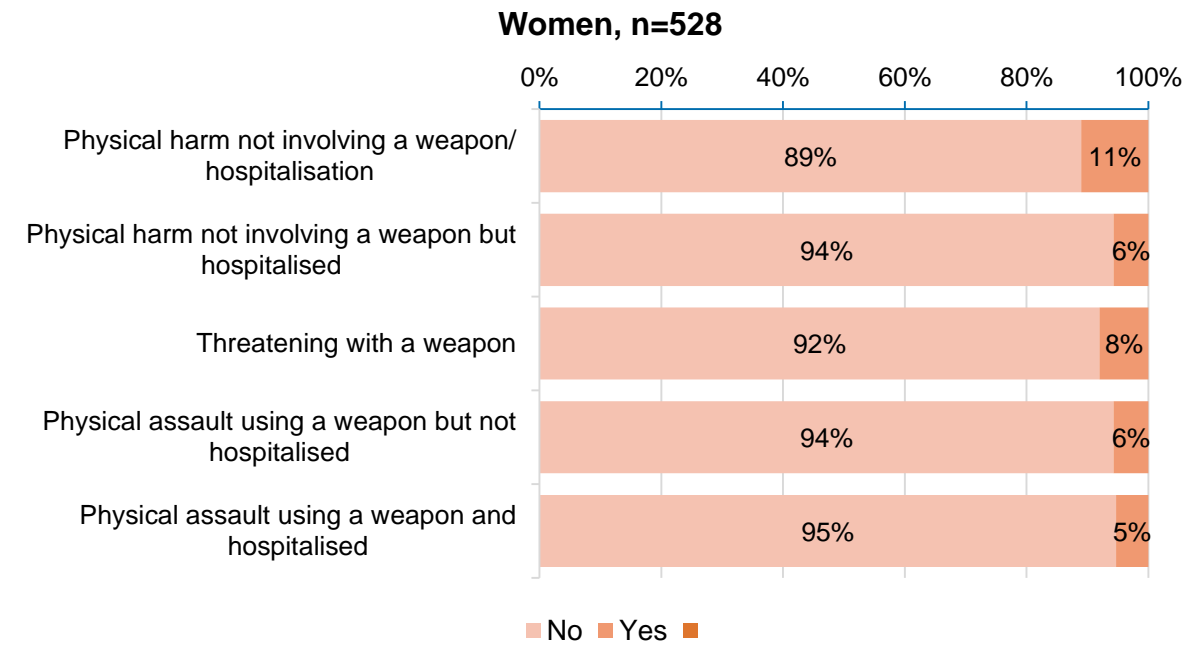
QA2 Physical Assault- Reflecting on the LAST 12 MONTHS, please rate how frequently have you PERSONALLY experienced these behaviours from a STRANGER while travelling by Metro Trains Rail.

Most women riders (50%) experienced harassment <18 years. Stares and catcalls dominates. A high majority had no serious assault experience when aged under 18; but 5% Women riders experienced hospitalisation from physical assault with a weapon.

Personal Harassment in teenage years



Serious Physical Assault in teenage years



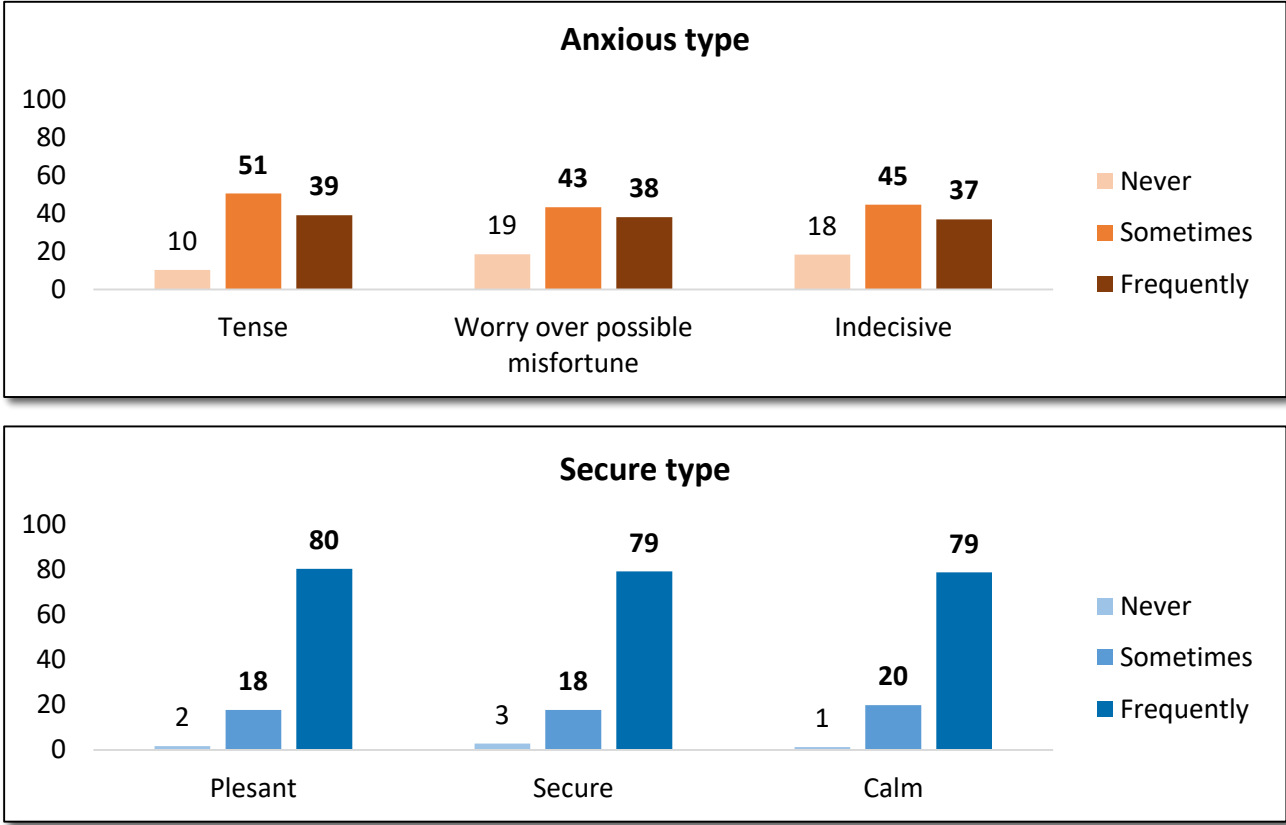
Source:  
- Monash Female and Gender Diverse Rail User Survey, October 2024

Note:  
QA5 When you were UNDER 18, did you PERSONALLY experience any harassment from a STRANGER while travelling by Metro Trains Rail Services?

QA6 Physical Assault- When you were UNDER 18, did you PERSONALLY experience any of the following incidents from a STRANGER while travelling by Metro Trains Rail Services?

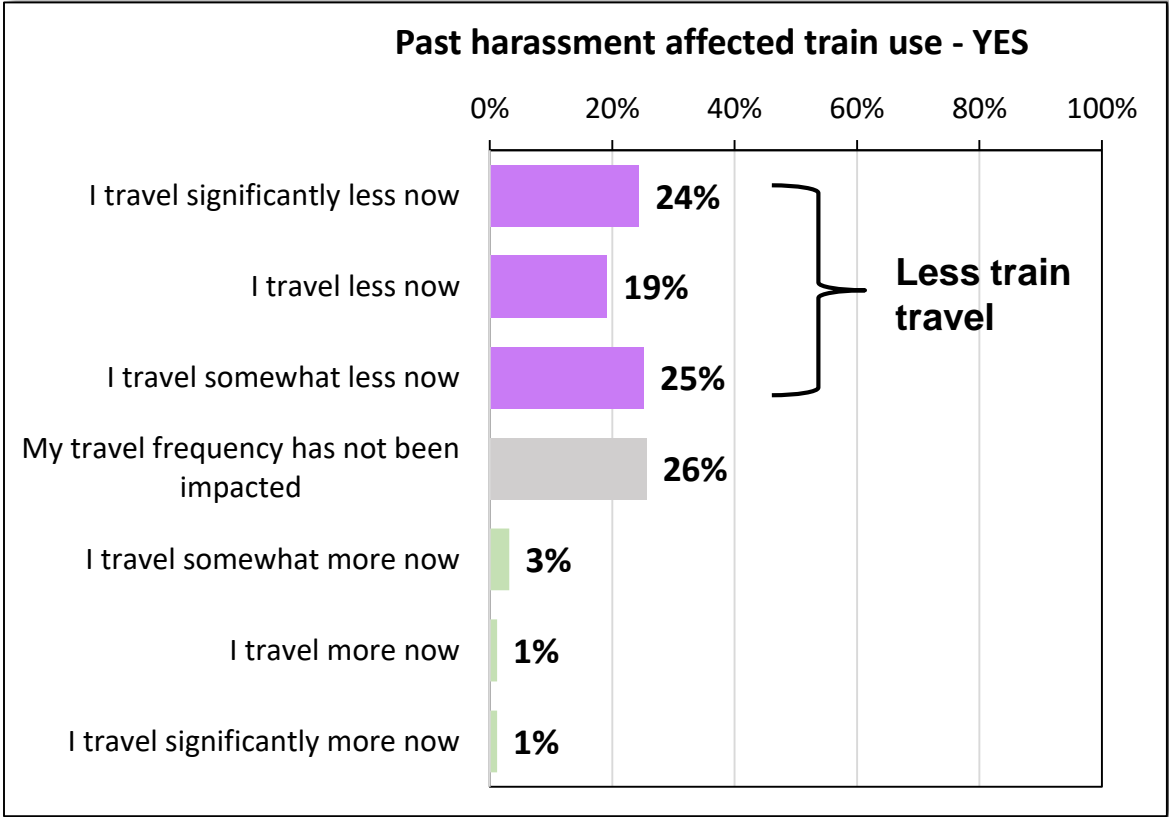
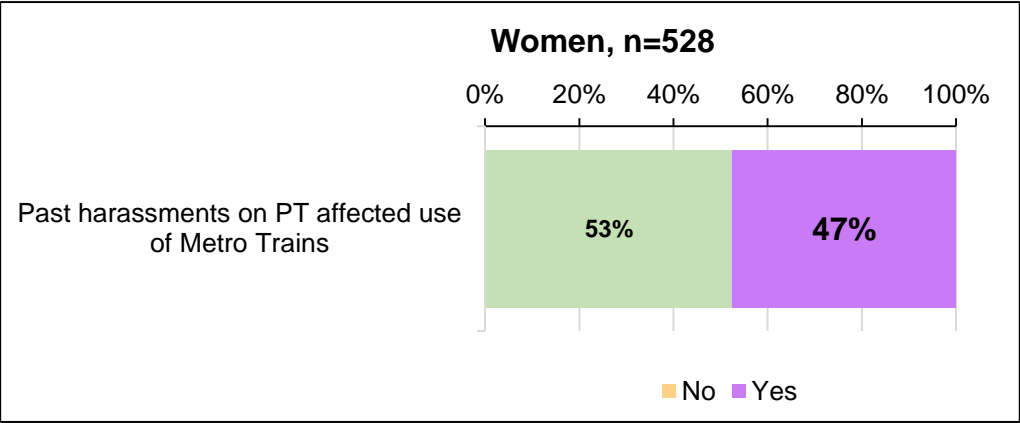
The results shows that generally women feel secure and calm in their daily life; while 39% feel tense frequently and another 37% worry over possible misfortune.

In my daily life, I generally feel.....



47% women riders self-reported that the harassment experience affected their rail use. Of these 24% women travel significantly less now.

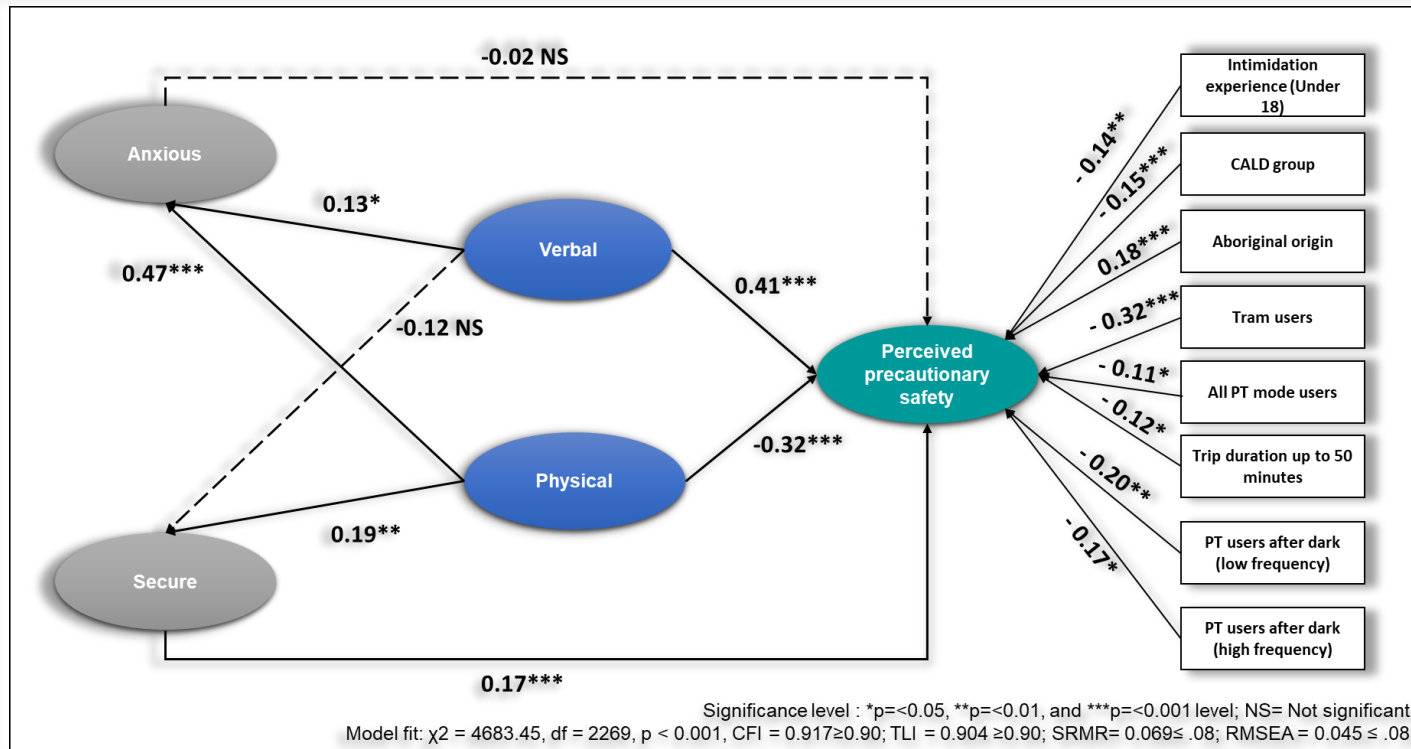
Rail User Survey 2024 – Impact of Harassment Experience on Rail Use – Main Target Sample



Source:  
- Monash Female and Gender Diverse Rail User Survey, October 2024

Note:  
QA7 Overall, do you think your perception (or experience) of harassment on public transport has affected your use of Metro Trains Rail Services in Melbourne?

The SEM path model shows that verbal harassment experience (0.41) and physical harassment experience (- 0.32) are the strongest predictors of perceived precautionary personal safety (PPS).



### Key findings

- Women with prior experiences of verbal harassment are more likely to adopt precautionary behaviours. **Those who have experienced physical assault are less likely to feel safe**, even when engaging in coping behaviours.
- The results show that women who experienced **verbal harassment are more likely to exhibit anxiety-related traits**.
- In contrast, those who have experienced physical assault may exhibit both secure and anxious traits, though anxiety shows a stronger association.
- women who experienced harassment in the form of **intimidation in adolescence (- 0.18) are less likely to feel personally safe on transit**, even with PPS.
- PPS showed a negative relationship with **tram users (- 0.32)** and **rail use after dark (- 0.20)**.
- Women from **CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse)** backgrounds also reported lower levels of PPS (- 0.15)



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Conclusions



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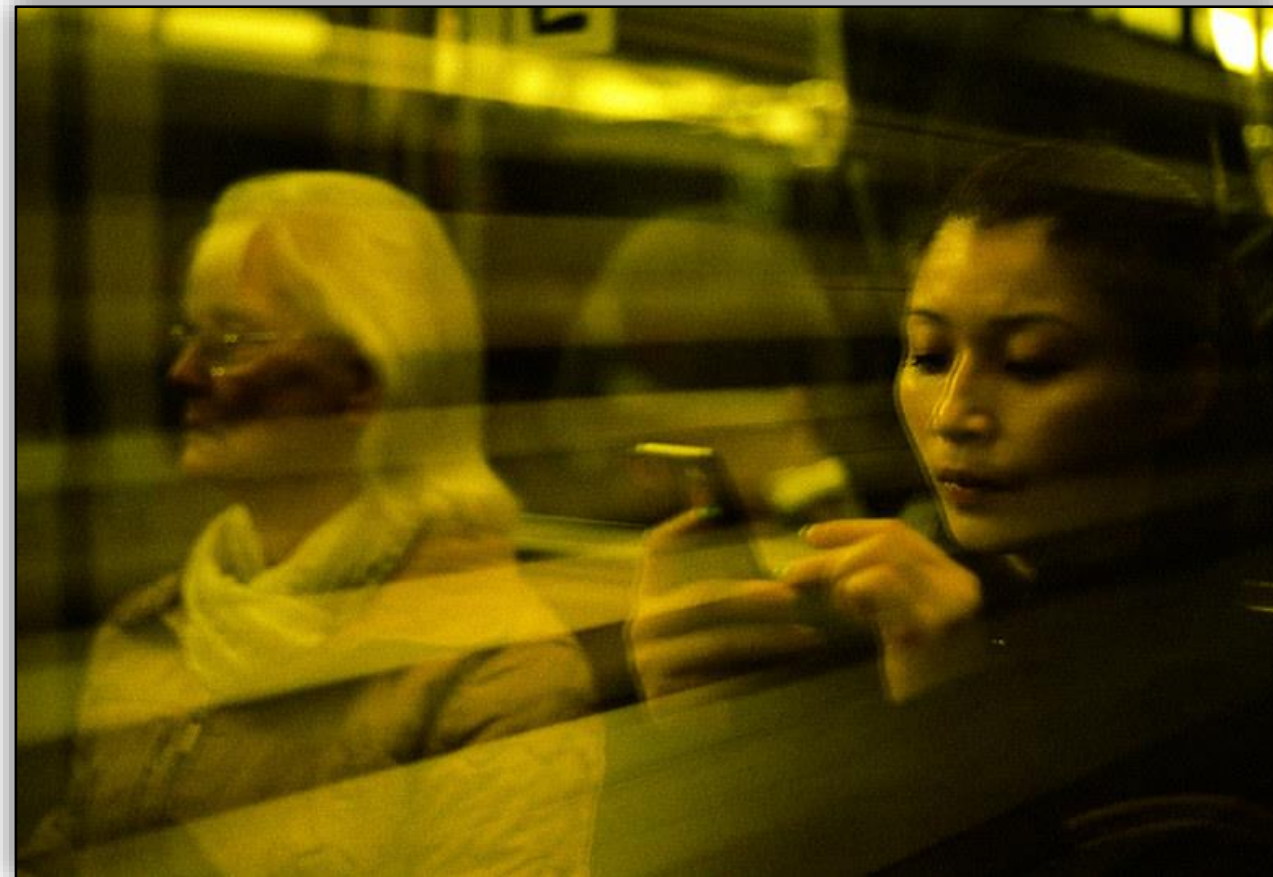
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**This study offers new insights into the factors shaping women's perceived precautionary safety (PPS) on transit in Melbourne. The findings highlight the need for policy intervention that includes trauma-informed, intersectional approaches to transit personal safety**

### Policy recommendations

- **Promote early education and prevention:** Launch awareness campaigns in schools and for young transit users to address harassment during adolescence.
- **Enhance after-dark travel safety:** Improve lighting, visibility, and ensure proactive staff presence at tram stops and rail stations.
- **Integrate diverse lived experiences:** Involve CALD and Indigenous women's perspectives in transport planning decisions.
- **Adopt behavioural and emotional safety measures:** Move beyond infrastructure by implementing bystander intervention and gender-sensitive staff training.
- **Support participatory co-design:** Empower women riders to shape safer transit environments through inclusive planning and feedback loops.



Please reach out for more information

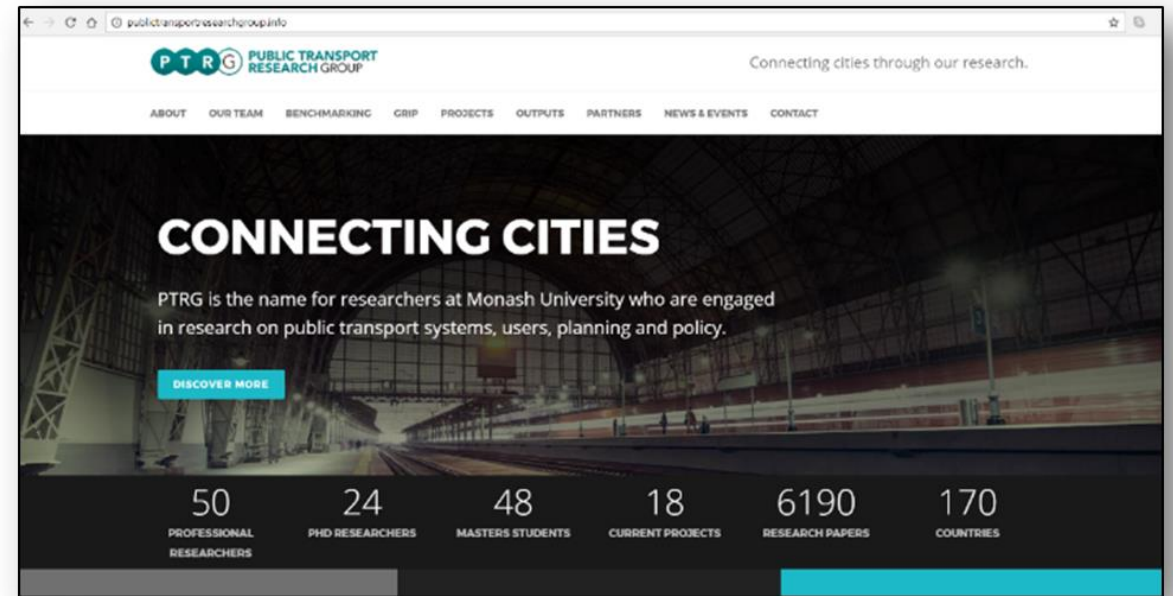


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