This is a train-stopping love story

As a public transport commuter I often dwell on all the things that go wrong with our services, and let’s face it there’s quite a few. This time however, I’d like share some of my positives of public transport life.

Firstly, I’d like to make a shout out to the friendly conductors who go above and beyond the simple ‘Hello, Myli’ please.

A few weeks ago I was at the train station and young woman was sniffing and wiping away tears as she sat alone outside the station.

One V/Line staff member sat next her and asked if she was OK. She said she’d been left stranded by her friends with no money or working phone and had to somehow get all the way back to Traralgon.

The staff member told her not to worry and he’d see what he could do for her.

Five minutes later he returned with a glass of water and ticket from Geelong to Melbourne and Traralgon, free of charge.

He also came back to check on her regularly throughout the train ride back to Melbourne.

There’s also friendly conductors who go out of their way to ask how you are or how was your day? Some of whom ve even learn your name.

Secondly, thank you V/Line for introducing the quiet carriages. After a 10-hour work day, silence is definitely golden and, from my experience, most people respect the sanctity of the quiet carriage, and if they don’t they’re visibly shaken and asked to get them the message across.

Thirdly, thanks to public transport, I now get two hours to myself everyday.

Two hours where no one wants anything but to connect with other traffic or crazy drivers and two hours where I can just sit, think and relax.

I can read a book, I can even read the papers or get a head start on the day’s workload, if I’m feeling particularly productive.

I met a lady a few weeks ago who told me she should never chase a train, a tram or a man because another one will always come along. But stupidly, I ignored this advice one morning and chased down a train like a bat out of hell. With bags flying off me and hair in a heap, I chased it down and was actually quite inspired by the driver and made a very rare move.

I stopped the train, yep that’s right, he was pulling up from the platform and he stopped the train so this crazy lady could get on board.

I always, really just like to thank that driver who let me off, with a small shovel of my dignity left.

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Compo Cross No 3854

Straight Clues

ACROSS
17 Silly
19 Duster left out for some time
20 Dirty, so I left
21 Clan
22 Tense as turns to show intent

DOWN
14 Possessor
15 Propose a copy
2 Stand for
22 Give a kick

Cryptic Clues

ACROSS
1 One poet, in fact, moved to speak as a bishop
2 Crowned part of a book
3 Headless pullet runs round
4 Headline pulled round with this clue material
5 Retiring, but finishes as M
6 Regard
7 Estuary in front of a house
8 Process can never come true
11 Who admits to being a pretender
12 Check point on turn of tide
13 Far from temporary, looks turning at last
14 Putter left out for some bashed pastry
20 Dear, so I left
21 Christmas card from time tone performance
22 Tense as turn’s show equally of sensation

DOWN
1 Box bad finish first to last
2 Allows to mirror perceptions
3 I and it typifies with a short poem to be sung

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Jareds.Moloney@news.com.au

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Marketing:
Matthew Hood
x 5227 4400
E matthew.hood@news.com.au

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Giant Oil tanker Phoenix Advance has broken a Geelong shipping record it’s the deepest to have sailed into City Port.

It’s arrival yesterday points to the multi million-dollar benefits of a new channel clearance monitoring system.

The Singapore-flagged crude carrier is charted a previously unmatched draught of 11.9m entering the port, navigating the way for operators to increase loads on vessels.

Viva Energy Geelong refinery chiefs estimate allow- ance of 10m of extra draught on an oil carrier will equate to $1 million in savings a year.

Vietnamese Regional Channels Authority chief executive Captain Peter McGovern said the introduction of the Melbourne Regional Channel Dynamic Under Keel Clearance system at Geelong Port was one of the most significant achievements during his decade at the helm.

The system uses algorithms based on tides, channel dimensions and ship “squaw” or depth while laden to provide pilots with precise advice on clearances and travel speeds.

Mr McGovern said some ships would be able to carry 7000 to 9000 more tonnes of cargo.

“This makes Geelong more competitive in the long term. Ships around the world are getting bigger and if Geelong wasn’t able to offer at least some advance in size then Geelong slowly slips down the leader,” he said.

The authority charges ships according to gross tonnage and for their draughts.

“Every centimetre over 10.7m there’s an extra charge, so you can see the attraction for us. If the ships sink deeper, we get more money,” Capt McGovern said.

“The attraction for the freighters is they sell 7000 tonnes more and the attraction for the ship is it’s being paid to carry 7000 more tonnes of cargo.”

Viva Geelong refinery general manager Thys Heyns said the plant accounts for more than 50 per cent of Geelong Port trade and about 20 per cent of all ship visits to Geelong.

“For Viva Energy, each additional 10m in vessel draught results in a saving of about $1 million per annum,” Mr Heyns said.

“During the past few years we have worked closely with parties, including the VRCA, to maximise the size of vessels that can be accommodated on refineries berths.

“As a consequence we can now concurrently berth two large crude or other feedstock vessels. That helps reduce ship demurrage costs.”

The channel’s authority paid $800,000 and has annual fees for the DUKC system.

Capt McGovern has said he will step down as VRCA chief executive next month.

AS one of 14 Australian universities to feature in world rankings, Deakin is in the top 2 per cent of universities.

Ranked 11th in Australia and 24th in the world, the university has catapulted into plac- es in a year to climb in the international academic rankings.

Deakin vice-chancellor Jane den Hollander said the news was humbling to staff and students.

“This is particularly pleasing trajectory, given Deakin moved into the top 500 in the ARWU rankings for the first time only two years ago,” Prof- essor den Hollander said.

In 2015 it announced its entry to the top 500 ranking, positioned at 412.

The university has now risen to 183 out of 1500 institutions worldwide.

This is welcome news and promising for a young univer- sity like Deakin, which researches across a full range of disciplines and has a strong focus on teaching excellence across the communities we serve,” she said.

Prof den Hollander said Deakin’s improved ranking was due to the high standard of research projects being done.