

Ann Wason Moore



‘Ditch the distractions’: Safety warning ahead of new tram opening

It's been 210 weeks and five days since construction first began on stage three of the light rail.

And now, we are just days away from its official opening. Of course, just how many days until the tram welcomes its first passengers remains unclear, even if social media is running rampant with rumours that it will launch before the end of the month.

However, the fact is that we'll only know the date five days out from the official light rail green light.

Basically, everyone wants to launch the service ASAP, but it can only be ready when it's ready ... every single test must be run and every item ticked off before the first passenger boards.

And five days is apparently the sweet spot between giving the public notice and ensuring the first service is not delayed by even a single day.

Given it's been 2436 days since funding for stage three was officially announced, you would think this last stretch would pass faster than a high-speed train, but instead it's crawling like M1 traffic.

While the stage three saga never inconvenienced me (other than some online hate from readers), I know it has been tough for many residents and businesses – and now that the pain of construction is almost passed, I am incredibly hopeful it will be worth the wait for those who

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survived.

It couldn't come at a better time for my own family.

Now with four drivers and three cars, there is no need to buy another – the tram or Uber can take me wherever I need to go at a fraction of the cost of my annual car registration and insurance alone.

One of the perks of this long light



Caio is fronting a new safety campaign reminding pedestrians to be aware of trams when out and about on the Gold Coast.

rail wait is we can begin the service with 50c fares at a time when an unexpected war has set petrol prices alight.

Indeed, back when construction began in July 2022, we were still processing Russia's recent invasion of Ukraine, Australia had only just reopened its borders, and ChatGPT was yet to be launched.

But one thing that has not changed since that date, nor since July 2014 when stage one of the light rail service commenced, is the need to focus on safety.

Walking across the Gold Coast Hwy recently for my regular apple doughnut from Foster's Bakery, I watched as a man very nearly met his maker after not noticing the giant yellow tram headed in his direction.

Charter boat? What charter boat? Now, I'll admit that the pedestrian

crossings are a little out of sync at the moment. You often have to wait what seems an excessive amount of time before the green man appears, and the temptation to sprint across when the coast is clear is very real.

However, what this man failed to consider was that this coast now includes trams.

So while there were no cars to be seen, he very nearly ran right in front of the tram taking off from the station.

It's one of the reasons that light rail operator G:Link recently launched a new safety campaign about pedestrians and trams (another sign that the official opening is imminent), featuring a young Brazilian man who collided with a tram due to distraction.

Setting aside personal embarrassment for the sake of public

safety, Caio shared his story – and the video – of the day when, wearing his earbuds and listening to loud music, he bounced off a moving tram, luckily landing safely back in the station with a few bumps and bruises.

With only days left until the light rail extension opens, let's remember to use the pedestrian crossings, ditch the distractions, don't rush to catch the tram (another one comes along every few minutes) and leave the tracks for the trams – use the designated entry and exit points.

After waiting 210 weeks and five days, it would be a shame if the first thing the new extension delivered was a trip to the emergency department instead of your destination.

We've waited long enough.

Let's make sure we survive to enjoy the ride.

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