

MEDIA RELEASE

14 January 2013

TRAIN SURFERS APPREHENDED

Two 14-year-olds were taken into custody by Tasmania Police after a “train surfing” incident on Sunday on the North-West Coast.

TasRail and Tasmania Police were contacted by concerned community members who saw the youths riding train 135 between Burnie and Ulverstone. The driver was contacted by Train Control and the train was immediately brought to a controlled stop; however an initial search of the train failed to locate the youths. Following a second report from an Ulverstone resident, the driver again brought the train to a controlled stop and the young men were apprehended by Tasmania Police.

TasRail Chief Executive Officer, Damien White said he was shocked by this incident but thankful the young men were not injured or even killed.

“They were extremely lucky,” Mr White said. “This type of reckless behaviour is extremely dangerous, not to mention the anxiety and stress that it causes our drivers”.

TasRail will follow up this incident with Tasmania Police. Mr White praised the community members’ actions for promptly reporting the incident.

“The people were concerned that these youths were in danger – and they were”.

“Some people have the false perception that Tasmanian trains are slow and that the risks are not as high as in mainland states. But one wrong move and the speed of the train is irrelevant to the injuries that can be sustained.”

Unfortunately, TasRail confirms that this is not the first incidence of ‘train riding’. Last financial year TasRail reported 91 trespass incidents, an increase of 68% from 2010/2011. Of these incidents a total of four involved illegal riding on rollingstock.

“The railway corridor is strictly a no trespass zone and for very good reason. It is an extremely high risk environment and the potential for serious injury and loss of life is very real” Mr White said.

TasRail encourages community members to report any unsafe act including trespass as soon as possible. Incidents can be reported to the 1300 TASRAIL or to Tasmania Police.

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