

# News

CRANBOURNE

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## Guarding against train crime



Playing it safe: from left, Merinda Park Stationeer Julia Welham, Cranbourne Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Peter Scollo and RAGE chairman Steve Beardon.

By Lisa Dodd

SECURITY guards will soon be patrolling Cranbourne and Merinda Park Railway stations at night in a bid to increase passenger safety.

An M>Train spokesperson said the security presence was one of several initiatives being taken to enhance passenger safety and security.

Residents Against Graffiti Everywhere (RAGE) has been lobbying for more than two years for more security on local train networks, and is happy with the end result.

"This initiative, especially at night when most people feel threatened, goes a long way to discouraging gangs and louts from travelling on the train network," RAGE chairman Steve Beardon said.

"Hopefully, we will see an increase in patronage through to Cranbourne."

"The more people that use the train network, the safer it will become."

Mr Beardon said residents were entitled to travel without the threat of abuse or "being struck by a rock smashing through the window."

He said that as newer trains were phased into the system, more on-board security measures would be introduced, such as security cameras and panic buttons to alert police to a problem.

"Windows on our trains have now been strengthened, and we hope patronage to Cranbourne will soon begin to increase," he said.

"This will further attract people to shop or visit Cranbourne."

"To date many people have avoided using trains, especially shift workers such as nurses, for fear of harassment."

"People also fear their car will be stolen from the station car parks."

Mr Beardon said RAGE, along with the Merinda Park Stationeers, was still lobbying for a permanent security guard to be posted at Merinda Park Station.

He said this would significantly reduce vandalism.

Cranbourne Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Peter Scollo said it was imperative train stations provide a safe mode of transport.

"First impressions are important in Cranbourne because families wanting to move here have a lot of children under the age of driving," he said.

"If the stations are not manned it could influence whether new families are attracted to the area or not."

"If I was a parent and my children were using the train system to go to school or university it's important they are assured they are using a safe station."

"From a property value and business point of view, it's very important that the facility is kept to a high standard."

RAGE and Merinda Park Stationeers say they will continue to try and attract more guards to local train stations.

*RAGE: Lobbying for safer, cleaner suburbs*