



ACTIVITY NINE:

From the Transit Officers

There are many people employed by Transperth to ensure passengers have a safe travel experience. These people are selected and trained to provide a number of services to help passengers. This activity gives students an opportunity to meet the Transperth people who come into direct contact with passengers.

Student Outcomes

Society and the Environment

Strand: Natural and Social Systems

Political and Legal Systems

NSS 4.2 The student understands that rules and laws result from decisions about rights and responsibilities.

Strand: Resources

People and Work

R 4.3 The student understands that people act in various ways to make workplaces more effective.

Strand: Investigation, Communication and Participation

Conducting Investigations

ICP 3.2 The student gathers information from more than one source and records useful information using a variety of techniques.

ICP 4.2 The student consistently applies social data-gathering techniques to collect and record accurate information from a variety of sources.

Purpose

This activity will provide an opportunity for the student to:

- Describe how the purpose of law making is to protect people and their property
- Describe how laws are made, administered and enforced
- Identify examples of work situations that require use of appropriate equipment, materials, clothing and behaviour – safety regulations.

Preparation

- Teachers can prepare the following focus questions on the blackboard:

Focus Question 1: Why does Transperth employ Transit Officers?

Focus Question 2: What is the role of a Transit Officer?

Focus Question 3: What are their rights and responsibilities?

- Ensure students have access to the internet so they can research 'Legal Authorities and Responsibilities' at www.righttrack.wa.gov.au
- Photocopy *Resource Six – From the Transit Officers: Sue and Ivan*.

Procedure

1. In groups, students can explore the topic using the focus questions to gather relevant information.
2. Students can plan a strategy to gather information.
3. Brainstorm the following as part of information collection:
 - What is the history of Transit Officers?
 - Why does Transperth employ Transit Officers?
 - What is the role of a Transit Officer?
 - What special equipment does a Transit Officer have?
 - What skills does a Transit Officer need?
 - Does a Transit Officer have special training?
 - What rights does a Transit Officer have?
 - Who gave the Transit Officers these rights?
 - Why were Transit Officers given these rights?
 - What are your Transit Officer experiences?



4. Read *Resource Six - From the Transit Officers: Sue and Ivan*.
5. Ask the following questions:
 - How would the Transit Officer react to aggression, bullying and/or violence on the train?
 - What sort of bullying do you think Transit Officers witness?
 - What would you do if you were a Transit Officer? How would you react?
 - What special skills does a Transit Officer have to deal with these situations?
6. Create a series of interview questions for a Transit Officer.
7. Invite a Transit Officer to visit your school so students can present their questions.

Variation

Research other people and roles in the community that are tasked with keeping people safe. Some of these roles are paid. Some of them are unpaid. Create a series of interview questions and find out what special skills these people have and what they like most about their job.

Fact File

Transit Officers operate on all train lines and train services in the Perth metropolitan area. Previously, these Transit Officers were called Transit Guards. The Transit Officers became part of Transperth in 2002 to ensure passengers had a safe journey while using Perth's train system. In order to provide the best security system possible, all Transit Officers go through specialised training which involves an initial 12 week training course to ensure they are equipped with the most advanced skills required in their field. Transit Officers have the right to ask you your name, address and date of birth. For more information on the role of Transit Officers visit: www.righttrack.wa.gov.au or www.transitofficer.wa.gov.au

From the Kids

"I was at the Fremantle Station at night with my family. There was this guy acting strangely. He might have been drunk – I don't know. When the Transit Officer asked him for his ticket he was really argumentative. It looked like there was going to be trouble. I was a bit scared, but then the Transit Officer went over to get this other Transit Officer. He was a big guy and he looked African. He was so great. He came and squatted beside the young man. He diffused the whole situation. The young man calmed down and it all ended happily. No tickets were issued and the young man got on the train and there was no trouble. The Transit Officer was great!" – Anonymous (13)



INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT ONE

Sue – Transit Officer

What is your role with Transperth? I am a Transit Officer.

What are your responsibilities? I have three major responsibilities: customer service, safety and security. In terms of customer service, Transit Officers perform many duties such as helping people with wheelchairs and directing people who are unsure of where to go. As for safety and security, Transit Officers are a presence on the train station and on trains – they help people feel safe. We also monitor people's safety at all times. We watch the way they board trains and access the train station. Sometimes, Transit Officers also help locate missing children or people.

Why did you become a Transit Officer? I almost fell into it by accident. My friend was applying for a position, I went with her to the information day and here I am. I was actually looking for something completely different from what I was doing and this was a complete career change, an exciting challenge.

What is your favourite part of the job? Being part of a strong team of people who work really well together. I really love all the people I work with. We are a really tight knit group who always back each other up, particularly in dangerous situations. I also really enjoy interacting with the different people we help and meet while doing our job.

What is your least favourite part of the job? I hate dealing with young people who disrespect each other and themselves. It is also really sad to see young people hurting themselves with drugs and alcohol and not caring about the consequences.

What is the best experience you have ever had on the job? There's not really one experience that I can say was my best experience. I have had a lot of great experiences on this job. I really enjoy it, especially the relationships we build with regular train travellers and the people that we help. There was an elderly lady who fell at the station once and I helped her by administering first aid. Now, whenever she sees me, she always comes by and says hello. There was also a teenage boy, who was hanging around the wrong crowd and sometimes getting into trouble. He used to hang around the station a lot and one day I had to talk to him because he had done something wrong. We started chatting and I could see he had a lot of potential and he was just hanging around the wrong people. I told him that. After that he would always come and have a chat whenever he'd come to the station. One day he told me that he had decided to go back to school and was studying to be a chef at TAFE. He was also hanging out with a new group of people. He seemed really happy. I was really proud of him.

What do you believe are the most important qualities you need to be successful and enjoy your role? You need a lot of patience and common sense. Most importantly, you need some life experience and maturity because you can find yourself in very challenging or dangerous situations where you have to make accurate split-second decisions that can affect your safety and the



safety of others. You also have to like working with people. You deal with a variety of different people from varying backgrounds, ages, cultures and needs, so you also need to be able to adapt the manner in which you communicate to suit each individual person you talk to.

What advice would you give students who are thinking of becoming a Transit Officer? Get a trade or diploma first, as well as some experience in the workforce. I don't believe you can come straight out of school and become a Transit Officer. You need life experience because you need to be able to read situations and make accurate spontaneous decisions – that is something you learn with experience.

What did you do before you became a Transit Officer? I have had many different jobs. I have worked as a hairdresser, a truck driver, customer service manager and a tutor for students studying through distance education.

Where are you from? Victoria.

Favourite food? Thai.

Favourite colour? Yellow, it reminds me of the sunshine – it is a really warm colour.

Favourite music? I love music - all sorts of music. I listen to John Butler Trio, Eminem and the Simple Plan, just to name a few.

Hobbies? Reading psychological thrillers, crime, horror books e.g. Stephen King. I love travelling. I also love watching my son play basketball. He plays college basketball in the US so when I get to watch him it's a real treat.

Ambitions or dreams? I want to win Lotto so I can travel more. I would use some of my winnings to help out and do volunteer work in India and Vietnam.



INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT TWO

Ivan – Aboriginal Liaison Officer

What is your role with Transperth? I am an Aboriginal Liaison Officer.

What are your responsibilities? To liaise with Aboriginal passengers – help them and any other passengers with ticketing issues, behaviour issues and any general information or help needed. To mediate between Aboriginal passengers and the Transit Officers or Passenger Ticketing Assistants if any issues arise.

Why did you become an Aboriginal Liaison Officer? I wanted to make an impact and help my people.

What is your favourite part of the job? Meeting new people as well as establishing a relationship with the regulars who catch trains. I also really enjoy getting to know and help the new generation of Aboriginal kids catching trains. I love establishing a bond with them – sometimes I even discover that I am related to them! I also love speaking to people and I often bump into mates I haven't seen since the 60's.

What is your least favourite part of the job? I like my job – there aren't really any parts I don't like.

What is the best experience you have ever had on the job? I have had lots of great experiences I can't really pick a best one. I just really love helping people.

What do you believe are the most important qualities you need to be successful and enjoy your job? You need to be able to work in a team - to be there to help your workmates whether they are other Aboriginal Liaison Officers, Transit Officers or Passenger Ticketing Assistants. You also really need to be yourself and have a happy disposition – people can relate to that a lot easier. Most importantly, you need to have a love and good understanding of Aboriginal ways and culture and love helping Aboriginal people, and of course love helping people in general.

What advice would you give students who are thinking of becoming an Aboriginal Liaison Officer? You need life experience and need to genuinely like relating to and helping people. You also need a really good understanding of Aboriginal culture.



What did you do before you became an Aboriginal Liaison Officer? I worked in the mines.

Where are you from? Moora, WA.

Favourite food? My favourite question, I love food! My absolute favourite type of food is stir-fry.

Favourite colour? Toffee apple red. I really like cars in that colour.

Hobbies? I love travelling. I have travelled around Australia, but my favourite places are still within WA, they are: Esperance, Bunbury and Kununurra. I also love fishing.

Ambitions or dreams? To own a toffee-apple red Lamborghini, travel around the world and sing in a band. I'd also love to get married and have a family.