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## **Slater & Gordon calls for greater safety for seniors on trams**

Slater & Gordon lawyers are calling for greater safety and care of Melbourne's seniors on the city's tram network.

The law firm is currently representing a number of older people who have suffered debilitating injuries as a result of tram travel. This includes an 83 year old who suffered a broken shoulder after falling when the tram accelerated before she was able to reach a seat in October last year; a 79 year old woman who sustained a fracture to her right leg when a tram accelerated quickly in April and an 81 year old lady who fractured her hip when the tram accelerated whilst she was walking to her seat in March 2009.

Slater & Gordon motor vehicle accident lawyer Stuart Le Grand said Yarra Trams needed to provide appropriate training and support to tram drivers to ensure the safety of their older passengers.

"Trams are not like trains," Mr Le Grand said.

"There is constant interaction between trams and other traffic, including pedestrians, which leads to a greater risk of injury for older passengers if they are not secure or seated before a tram takes off."

"Yarra Trams should ensure that trams wait for their older passengers to be seated before taking off."

Mount Waverley resident Ana (surname withheld) has had to adjust to using a walking stick and other restrictions since she was injured on a tram in April 2006.

Ana sustained injuries to her elbow, lower back, neck, knee and shoulder after falling when the tram had to brake suddenly. Slater & Gordon recently settled her compensation claim for an undisclosed figure.

"As I fell down my left elbow hit the green ticket validation machine, before I came to land on my back on the tram floor," she said.

"I was in hospital for nine days after the accident and had to undergo surgery because my elbow had been severely fractured.

"Prior to the accident I was in good health and able to undertake a wide range of social, domestic, and recreational activities. I was a very social person but now I find it difficult to go out and visit people."

It has been a long recovery for Carlton North resident Giovanna (surname withheld) who was injured on a tram in October 2005.

Giovanna fell and injured her knee when the tram she was travelling on braked suddenly on Bourke Street, causing her to lose her balance and land heavily.

Mr Le Grand said Giovanna required a full knee replacement following the accident and had undergone two operations.

# Media Release

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“Giovanna enjoys being active. She had a highly active life that included rock concerts, ten pin bowling and other activities such as the theatre and opera”. Giovanna’s life was abruptly altered after multiple surgical procedures and extensive rehabilitation”.

Mr Le Grand said he believed that seat belts on trams, for older passengers, could also assist in reducing injuries.

“Even a small fall can have very significant consequences for an older person and therefore the needs of these commuters ought to be given special consideration by Yarra Trams.”

## **Media inquiries**

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