

RailCorp comments on the Daily Telegraph report *Another shock for city's frazzled commuters* (11 September) which trivialised RailCorp's intention to install Automatic External Defibrillator (AEDs) machines on busy stations.

AEDs are automatic devices designed for use by people with minimal or no training.

They are installed around the world in places where large numbers of people gather, including shopping centres, airports, sporting stadiums and stations.

Access to these devices is important because every minute defibrillation is delayed the chance of surviving a cardiac arrest decreases by 10%.

The devices we are evaluating have verbal instructions that clearly tell the responder what to do. The units automatically check the patient's heart rhythm and only deliver a shock if it is indicated. They don't deliver a shock if the person has a heart beat. An added benefit is that they instruct the responder if it is necessary to administer CPR and they provide verbal instruction on how to do this.

The Telegraph's treatment of RailCorp's plan to install defibrillators on busy stations brought strong criticism from a number of health professionals who have sent copies of their correspondence to the Telegraph to us.

Professor Michael O'Rourke, Professor of Medicine, University of NSW, wrote the following letter to the editor of the Telegraph:

*Proposed installation of cardiac defibrillators in major NSW railway stations follows a successful program by the Dept of Health in England and similar programs in the world's best airline terminals and aircraft fleets.*

*These have saved the lives of many commuters, since their use can be initiated in the crucial minutes before medical or paramedical help arrives.*

*RailCorp should be congratulated on its initiative to provide a safer environment for travellers.*

A letter to the editor from NSW St John's Ambulance and a media statement from the National Resuscitation Council echoed these views and commended RailCorp's initiative. These were not published by the Telegraph.