

TAKE CARE OF THE SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF YOUR BUS DRIVERS ON THE ROAD, NO MATTER WHERE THEY TRAVEL

Bus drivers deliver essential services to the public in metropolitan, regional, and rural locations. Despite the essential support they provide, bus drivers also face significant risks in their work, with many experiencing verbal and physical assaults from members of the public.

A recent state-wide survey showed that 96.5 per cent of Queensland bus drivers have been abused, with 89.4 per cent reporting they have been intimidated or threatened, and 62.4 per cent reporting that they get abused regularly.¹ In New South Wales, 81 per cent of bus drivers experience verbal abuse daily, with drivers believing they should receive training in both conflict resolution (48 per cent) and self-defence (47 per cent).²

Australia's bus drivers have a high level of interaction with the public and travel significant distances between locations, often crossing into remote regional and rural locations. Across the country, bus drivers are reporting continued safety and security risks that they face daily in their line of work. As such, driver and passenger safety is of the utmost importance, especially when additional support from head office or emergency services is far away in the event of an incident.

Bus drivers face a variety of challenges each day, including fatigue and the potential for traffic incidents, as well as the threat of physical and verbal attacks from passengers. It's essential that bus companies can deliver a level of safety and security that ensures drivers are protected and supported as much as possible, whether they're servicing metropolitan areas, or regional locations.

As with many other industries, transport providers are increasingly turning to bespoke, new age technology solutions to help support their operations and deliver safer and more secure working environments for employees. Push-to-Talk over Cellular (POC) has emerged as an effective technology solution to help transport providers keep their drivers and passengers safe, secure, and connected in their travels, regardless of their location.

1. <https://www.twuqld.asn.au/media-releases/bus-attacks-new-statewide-figures-released-today/>

2. <https://twunsw.org.au/press/media-alert-nsw-bus-strike/>

THERE ARE TWO PRIMARY WAYS POC SOLUTIONS CAN HELP DELIVER BETTER SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR AUSTRALIA'S BUS DRIVERS:

1

CONSISTENT COMMUNICATION

Bus drivers support communities in regional, rural, and metropolitan areas where it is not always possible to have reliable support close by, whether this is from other drivers, head office, or police and emergency services. In the event of traffic incidents or instances of passengers engaging in threatening behaviour, having a reliable communication channel is essential to ensure drivers and passengers can access critical support.

Unfortunately, traditional communication methods won't always cut it. While traditional radio supported by repeaters is often a viable option in metropolitan areas, it's not always possible, and the potential for its use reduces in more remote locations. Satellite phones can be expensive to maintain, and mobile phones can be unreliable in regional areas as well as illegal to operate while driving. Comparatively, POC solutions combine the best features of traditional radio with smartphones to create the ideal reliable communications channel that can be used across metropolitan, regional, and remote rural locations. This ensures consistency of service and reliability for drivers across the entire fleet.

2

VIDEO BACKUP

Video is a valuable tool for businesses to review and assess situations in the event of incidents or emergencies. While CCTV capabilities are available to support bus drivers and passengers on the road, they can be complicated to install and costly to run. They can also require support from SIM cards with high data allowances and can be disrupted by limited service in regional areas. As such, they can be uneconomical for large fleets.

Comparatively, investing in POC solutions with additional push-to-video duress features can deliver cost-effective video backup in times of need. Transport operators should look for solutions that feature built-in cameras that let drivers alert head office to any incident while simultaneously generating real-time video footage. This lets businesses deliver greater peace of mind to drivers and head office that someone will be able to view incidents and provide support from a distance as much as possible, regardless of the driver's location.

Beyond the immediate safety benefits of POC solutions for existing drivers, POC technology can also help transport operators appeal to new drivers by helping to create a culture of safety and support within the business. Transport operators, like many Australian organisations, are facing critical workforce shortages. In July 2022, the nation's unemployment rate dropped to a record low of 3.4 per cent.³ While this may be a boost for the economy, it's not all good news. A low unemployment rate shows little room for growth across the country, and businesses are struggling to attract and retain new talent.

Investing in POC solutions that help to foster better driver safety and connectivity can help transport operators to appeal to drivers looking to move to a company that has a culture of safety and puts its drivers first.

³. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/employment-and-unemployment/labour-force-australia/latest-release>

TRANSPORT OPERATORS SHOULD LOOK FOR SOLUTIONS THAT FEATURE BUILT-IN CAMERAS THAT LET DRIVERS ALERT HEAD OFFICE TO ANY INCIDENT WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY GENERATING REAL-TIME VIDEO FOOTAGE.





HOW VERTEL CAN HELP

Vertel is Australia's largest privately-owned telecommunications carrier with nearly 50 years' experience delivering critical network infrastructure services and reliable end-to-end solutions to enterprise, government, and service provider organisations in regional, rural, and metropolitan areas Australia-wide.

Vertel's POC with push-to-video solution helps transport companies deliver mission-critical safety and support to drivers and their passengers on the road, no matter where they are. The Vertel POC solution helps keep mobile workforces safe, in touch, and productive, and is ideal for life- and mission-critical applications. The Vertel POC solution with push-to-video feature can be customised to meet individual operator requirements and ensure driver safety while not alerting potential perpetrators. This gives dispatchers and emergency services real-time vision of what is happening on the bus, while also giving peace of mind to drivers that someone can see and support them when they need them.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW VERTEL CAN HELP YOUR BUSINESS ENHANCE THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF YOUR DRIVERS, CONTACT VERTEL TODAY.

POC IN ACTION – DYSON GROUP



ORGANISATION

Dyson Group

INDUSTRY

Transport

SOLUTION

Push-to-Talk over Cellular (POC)

Push-to-Video

BENEFITS

- increased safety for drivers
- increased service reliability and coverage
- covert push-to-video duress features.

Dyson Group, a family-owned and operated bus company operating throughout metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria and New South Wales (NSW), recently partnered with Vertel to deliver a communications upgrade with POC devices and covert push-to-video duress features to enhance driver safety and security across its fleet.

Following multiple acquisitions, Dyson Group's growing fleet inherited a variety of different communications systems, including mobile and ultra-high frequency (UHF) radios, which created challenges for drivers communicating with other drivers, depots, and head office.

To consolidate its communications systems and deliver a consistent communications channel to its drivers and employees for improved safety and security, Dyson Group engaged its longstanding partner, Vertel, to discuss possibilities for a POC communications upgrade.

The POC solution that Vertel put forward is a sophisticated mobile communications platform that combines the features of traditional two-way radio with the data functionality of smartphones, including underlying GPS tracking capabilities. It looks like a traditional two-way radio and is easily attached to the driver's dashboard. The solution features a built-in camera and includes covert push-to-video duress features that lets drivers alert head office to an incident while generating real-time video footage without alerting perpetrators.

The solution can be installed within 30 minutes, making it simple to use and easy to install. It can also be managed remotely, which means Dyson Group's IT team can install updates from one location, ensuring each vehicle has access to the most up-to-date communications platform.

“THE VERTEL POC SOLUTION WITH PUSH-TO-VIDEO DURESS FEATURES PROVIDES A CONSISTENT COMMUNICATION APPROACH THAT LETS US ENSURE EACH OF OUR DRIVERS CAN COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH EACH OTHER, AND WITH HEAD OFFICE, REGARDLESS OF THEIR LOCATION. THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE TO USE AND SIMPLE TO INSTALL; MAKING IT A VERY SIMPLE DECISION FOR DYSON GROUP.”

Roy Dyson, regional operations manager,
Dyson Group