



**Bendigo Autistic Advocacy
and Support Service**

Co-convenors

Beck Kelly - Sarah Hansford

Tony Langdon - Allison Worland - Susanna Flanagan

[REDACTED]
Crime Prevention
Victoria Police

[REDACTED]
Cc. Laura Edwards
Metro Trains
Level 16, 700 Collins Street
Docklands VIC 3008

Monday 31st October, 2016

Dear Rebecca;



We write following a telephone conversation with you a short time ago, about the autism lanyards introduced by local parents group in Box Hill.

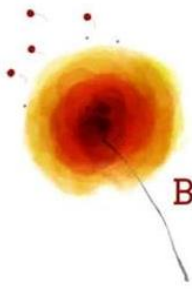
The Bendigo Autistic Advocacy and Support Service (BAASS) would like to share our experience and suggestions in order to ultimately guide policy and procedure and improve the accessibility and scope of the Autism Lanyard and ID card for autistic individuals proposed by a group of parents of autistic children in Box Hill, for use on Metro Trains Melbourne in conjunction with Victoria Police.

BAASS is an Autistic founded, led and driven not-for-profit organisation; the first of its kind in Australia. We endeavor to EMPOWER autistic people, families and communities to optimise their potential through a passionate, professional and experience based service providing RESPECTFUL individual, family, community and systemic advocacy and support.

BAASS bases our approach on the belief that neurodivergence is a natural part of a neurodiverse humanity. Autism is a genetic neurological difference or disability. Disabilities involve significant challenges and unique positives. Our challenges are compounded by the barriers predominantly caused by ignorance, and lack of inclusion and acceptance.

125 Wills Street
Bendigo
Victoria 3550

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We appreciate the intention behind this proposal as being safety and awareness of the autistic community accessing Metro Melbourne, and understand that this strategy may be something a number of autistic people may wish to utilise





BAASS, alongside many other advocates and organisations, advocate for active, extensive and meaningful inclusion of autistic people amongst not only accessibility and policy making panels/projects but also in educational programs within the community in general, with particular focus on first responders, health and education undergraduates and services.

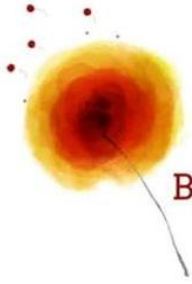
For those that do wish to utilise this proposal, we would like to propose some adjustments in the interests of being more accessible and inclusive of diversity. Please do not hesitate to contact us, should you wish for further information or consultation with BAASS.

- Welcome input from the broader autistic community and adjust accordingly. BAASS are able to offer support with this.
- It is important to note that many of the autistic adult population find the puzzle piece symbolism to be offensive, based on its historical origins. We do recognise that the puzzle piece has significant recognition amongst the general community as relating to autism. Ideally, we would advocate that the lanyards would include an alternative design but do acknowledge the reasoning behind the current design choice.
- Wording be adjusted to reflect strength based
- Guidelines for this proposal be developed, to communicate clear boundaries and expectations for those that utilise this. The development of clear and available guidelines will also provide further information for anyone needing clarification, further information about the use of these lanyards and can prevent misinterpretation. The most crucial aspects that should be included within guidelines would include a statement clearly articulating that
 - the use of these lanyards is **not compulsory** and is the personal choice of the individual person
 - that education, inclusion and acceptance remain priority
 - that autistic people **not** using lanyards will not be disadvantaged

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you welcome further input or support from us. We are available to share authentic experience and any relevant resources and sources that may be of benefit in developing policies and programs with genuine accessibility.

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We thank you for taking the time to consider our correspondence.

Regards;

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