



School Amateur Radio Club Network

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Public Transport On The Air (PTOTA)

Using your Amateur Radio on public transport can be a lot of fun! Now you can collect points and challenge your friends in an exciting new on-the-air activation program. Better still, at the end of each year you will receive a very nice participation certificate!

It's easy: Next time you are planning a public transport journey just remember to take along your VHF/UHF handheld Amateur Radio. From the minute you leave home to the time you arrive back, you are activating one or more public transport routes and can make PTOTA contacts. You can use any mode, any repeater or linked system, even setup at a nearby park and use your portable HF Amateur Radio. No need to upload log files: Just enter your contacts into the [PTOTA Log](#) to earn points as you go. There is even a [PTOTA blog](#) for you to record your experiences. You don't need a car, special equipment or antennas to excel in this program - It is accessible to every radio amateur.

If you are thinking this program is just for kids, you might be very surprised to learn that rediscovering public transport, even in retirement, can be quite a liberating experience: No driving, no traffic, no fines, no fuel, no parking, no fares (for seniors on the weekend, here in Melbourne, that is), regular exercise, visit parts of the city and suburbs you've never seen before, relax and enjoy the scenery, stop and smell the roses. We now combine this activity perfectly with visiting friends and family, shopping, dining and sight-seeing. Public transport is a sustainable and underutilised resource, so we are actually doing our bit for the environment as well - Every time we leave our car in the garage. Why not join us?

See next page for details.



PTOTA on the Train



PTOTA in a nearby park

Purpose

- To encourage the use of both Public Transport (PT) and Amateur Radio (AR)
- To promote AR to members of the general public
- To engage licenced school students in AR activities
- To get some healthy exercise, have some fun and make new friends on the air

Rules

- You must be on a journey involving some form of PT at some point
- You must be using a Radio Frequency transceiver operating on an amateur band
- You must operate in accordance with your AR licence conditions
- You must abide by the rules of the PT system
- You must be considerate to other users of the PT system

Activation

- Activate while travelling to or from a PT station or stop
- Activate while waiting for a PT vehicle at a PT station or stop
- Activate while travelling on board a PT vehicle
- Activate while in transit on a PT journey, in a park nearby any PT station or stop
- Activate using any amateur band and any mode
- Activate using any repeaters, satellites and Internet links, or just simplex
- Activate the same PT route as many times as you like
- Calling HF: "CQ PTOTA" or "CQ Public Transport On The Air".
- Calling V/UHF: "This is <your callsign>, Train/Tram/Bus/Ferry Mobile or Public Transport Portable, listening.
- Signing off: "73, <toot-toot, ding-ding, beep-beep or splash-splash, depending on your mode of transport>"
- Reference: "Google PTOTA for details" or "Checkout the SARCNET website"

Scoring

- Both activators and chasers accrue the same points per contact and receive certificates
- Activators must log contacts on this website for points to be accrued
- Receive one point per unique callsign, per PT route, per calendar year
- Only one contact is required to activate any route
- Points reset on 1 January each year, when certificates are e-mailed to each participant
- Note: Chasers must activate at least once in any calendar year to receive a certificate

FAQ

- What do you call this program? You say potato, I say PTOTA - Public Transport On The Air!
- What is public transport? A train, tram, bus, ferry, chair-lift or any mode for public groups. Not personal transport like a car, taxi, bike or scooter.
- What is activation? Using your AR gear while on a PT journey.
- What is an activator? Someone on a PT journey with AR gear.
- What is a chaser? Someone in contact with the activator using AR.
- Can any licenced amateur in any country participate in PTOTA: Yes, subject to your licence conditions.
- Can you have PTOTA to PTOTA contacts? Yes, but no additional points are awarded.
- Can you use portable HF AR gear? Yes, take it via a PT journey to a park nearby any PT station or stop.
- Security and privacy?
 - Your Email address and Password are never shared.
 - Your Email address is required so we can send you your certificate.
 - Your Password is required so that only you can see and modify your previous route activation status and log.
 - If you lose your Password, bad luck - just choose a new one: It will not affect your rankings or your certificate.

Hints and Tips

- Always be respectful to PT staff and members of the public, who may ask you what you are doing
- When asked, just say: "I am using Amateur Radio to talk to my friends"
- Sit next to the window on the side of the PT vehicle nearest the repeater
- Use the [repeaterbook](#) app to find the nearest repeaters
- Pre-program your handheld for all the repeater frequencies and CTCSS tones required
- Use a PT app or PT map and timetable to plan your journey.
- Avoid morning and afternoon PT rush hour
- Check your seat for any loose AR gear before you leave

PTOTA Log

- The [PTOTA Log](#) is used to enter and display activation data. Click the link or the button at the top of this page to access the PTOTA Log.
- Press **Refresh** to see the activator, chaser and route rankings for the current year
- Enter your **Activator** **Callsign, Email Address, Password** and press **Refresh** to see the routes you have activated
- Enter your **Activator** **Callsign, Email Address, Password, Route** and press **Refresh** to see the chasers you have logged for that route
- Maximum characters: Activator callsign (10), email address (30), password (10), route (30) and chaser callsign (10)
- **Routes:**
 - To avoid confusion and duplication, the route should be the actual number and/or name of the service as shown on the front of the PT vehicle
 - Where the route is just a number, simply combine it with the destination name. E.g.: The 67 Tram becomes the 67CARNEGIE route etc.
 - All spaces in the route will be removed and it will be converted to uppercase, so "733 Box Hill" becomes "733BOXHILL"
 - Traveling in the opposite direction usually means a different route: 67CARNEGIE becomes 67MELBOURNEUNI.
 - For clarification of route numbers and names see your local PT provider: In Victoria see [PTV](#). In NSW see [TNSW](#). In SA see [AMETRO](#).
 - Avoid route pollution: Check the route list to see what similar routes have been called. **Always check your spelling!**
 - A PT journey may involve many routes: Always use the current route on your journey, or the next route or last route if you are walking.
- **Logging:**
 - Only activators need to create log entries
 - Enter your **Activator** **Callsign, Email Address, Password, Route** and the **Chaser's Callsign**
 - Press **Add** to add a contact with the chaser on this route to your log
 - You can only add one unique chaser callsign per route per year
 - If you try to add a duplicate record, you will see an error message. Press **Refresh** to clear it.
 - Press **Delete** to delete a contact with the chaser on this route from your log
 - To change a route for multiple chasers you have to delete each one from the incorrect route then add each one back with the correct route

Important

- Participation in PTOTA is at your own risk
- Please take all necessary precautions to operate responsibly, leagally and to stay safe at all times