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Police Presser on Melbourne car rampage

News

Witnesses describe chaos amid Bourke St mall rampage

Monique Hore, Padraic Murphy, Grant McArthur and Genevieve Alison, Herald Sun
January 20, 2017 10:11pm

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SHOPPERS, office workers and tourists sprang into action in the moments after a car mowed down women, children and men in Bourke St.

Chilling footage and accounts reveal dozens of terrified pedestrians dived into cafes, under tables and into convenience stores as the rampaging car mounted pavements targeting

them.

Witnesses have told how immediately after the victims were hit, others who had somehow escaped rushed to help them.

They held their hands and heads and offered any first aid they could render until paramedics arrived.

Two men outside Flinders St station earlier attempted to stop the Holden Commodore performing doughnuts.

One tried to smash the car's windscreen with what appeared to be a baseball bat, as bystanders whipped out their phones to film the bizarre incident and call police for help.



Three killed in Melbourne CBD attack

“People were trying to stop him,” witness Jessica Kershaw said. Soon after, 22-year-old street performer Jordan Doust, who was halfway through his show, told of the horrific moment when a man “drove on to the footpath from the tram tracks and started to go for people”.

“They were running and screaming and about 20 cops chasing up behind him,” he said. “It was frantic and the people were trying to get out of the way,” he said.

Shocked Jim Reymolds said the car sped along the mall about 80kmh.

A stunned shopper reported “bodies flying through the air” as the car headed west of the mall, where at least three people, including a child, died.

The area was filled with workers grabbing food or fresh air during their lunch break.



📷 Shoppers rush to the aid of those hit by the car. Picture: Tony Gough

Former police chief Christine Nixon stepped out of the RACV Club to see a car — its bonnet crumpled by people it had hit — rushing towards her.

She turned to see bleeding bodies lying on footpaths and the workers rushing to help.

“You see people on the ground, you see people who had been killed or been hit,” Ms Nixon said.

“Nobody just left these people on the ground. Everyone who was close by rushed to help. We are extraordinary lucky for people to have done that.”

Among the heroic helpers was a homeless man who stopped to hold the hand of an injured woman.

Ms Nixon also described the heart-stopping moment she spotted an overturned pram.

“Turning that stroller over, I was hoping there was no child in it,” she said. “But then you just think: ‘What happened to the child?’. I think the child is critically ill in hospital.”

Workers, desperate for a safe place, converged on a small Priceline office, not far from where the Commodore was stopped.



📷 Pedestrians were mowed down in Bourke Street. Picture, Tony Gough

Gunshots, now known to have been from police, rang out. “It was like sardines, all squished in the Priceline office and then the emergency call over was saying we’re in lockdown,” a barista from a nearby cafe said. “We were just in there for a while, one of the girls was really upset and she just said she heard shots fired and everyone was running.

“She was in an office outfit and she obviously came from Bourke St — everyone was running from Bourke St.”

Bourke St Mall was closed, and surrounding streets locked down, as police declared the situation contained.

Many of those who lingered at police tape were witnesses waiting to report what they had seen or helpers.

One man who saw the Commodore boxed in traffic at the South Wharf intersection at 11.39am — hours before the attack — wished he could have done more.

“I thought to myself, if I was in my work van, I would have cut across him,” he said.



📷 The aftermath of the scene after a car struck pedestrians in Melbourne CBD. Picture: Alex Coppel

Hospitals swamped by the battered and bloody

FOUR people, including a 10-year-old child, were confirmed dead late last night, while more than 20 people remained in hospital with serious injuries after being mowed down in the CBD.

Dozens more received emergency care on bloodied city streets in the immediate aftermath of the car rampage.

The 10-year-old, a man in his 30s and a woman in her 30s, died without making it to hospital after being struck by the Commodore just after 1.30pm.

A fourth victim, whose age and sex had not been confirmed, died in hospital late last night.

The three earlier deaths in the city occurred at three different locations.

Surgeons at two hospitals were still operating to try to save other critically injured patients, including a three-month-old.



📷 Pedestrians rushed to help those mowed down in Bourke Street. Picture: Tony Gough

An infant, thrown from its pram, was so seriously injured police could not wait for an ambulance and instead it rushed it to Royal Children's Hospital in a police car.

“Emergency treatment was given at the scene to that child, police ended up taking that child to hospital in the police car because we couldn't wait for the ambulance to arrive such was the condition of the child,” he said.

RCH chief of surgery Mike O'Brien told the *Herald Sun* the baby was in a critical condition in surgery, while a two-year-old in intensive care was listed as being in a serious but stable condition.



📷 Paramedics at Bourke Street and Elizabeth Street. Picture: Alex Coppel

A nine-year-old was admitted to a ward in a serious condition with limb injuries, while a 13-year-old was also in a stable condition in the emergency department. “It is a critical incident for those children involved. The staff are doing what they do, they are professionals and they are getting on with it,” he said.

Melbourne’s hospitals were so stretched a 23-year-old was also treated for a limb injury at the Royal Children’s.

Emergency staff had been inundated with critically injured people and the hospital issued a plea on social media for families not to bring in non-urgent patients for treatment.

After receiving 11 of the most seriously injured victims, Royal Melbourne Hospital had to suspend its normal surgeries to ensure operating theatres could cope with the carnage.

By mid-evening three of the Royal Melbourne patients were still critical and surgeons were operating on two others. Two Royal Melbourne patients were stable last night, while the remaining six are also regarded as being stable.



AU VIC: Police Confirm Three Dead and Five Critical in Deliberate Car Attack January 20

The horrific injuries included one patient with arterial bleeding inside their head from a skull fracture, while a man suffered chest injuries, multiple broken ribs, a collapsed lung and facial and cranial injuries.

Of the seven patients taken to The Alfred, two were still critical last night and two were serious and three stable.

Six less serious patients were also taken to St Vincent's Hospital, most suffering fractures in their limbs and faces.

Ambulance Victoria state health commander Paul Holman said it was difficult for emergency workers to cope with injured people spread across almost three city blocks.

“Despite several people having serious injuries, bystanders remained calm and were helping those who had been hurt,” he said.

‘Our hearts are breaking’: City shock

Premier Daniel Andrew has applauded efforts of emergency services and bystanders who rushed to the aid of those killed and hurt.

“Our hearts are breaking this afternoon ... but we can be confident that we are stronger than this evil, criminal act,” he told reporters this afternoon.

He also appealed to Victorians to remain patient while police investigated the actions that led up to the terrifying incident.

Mr Andrews said he was proud of the “first class job” of emergency service workers.

“They have supported the most vulnerable, and they have apprehended the man involved in this evil act,” he added.

He also paid “special tribute” to ordinary Victorians who came to the aid of their fellow citizens.



📷 A man doing doughnuts at the intersection of Flinders St and Swanston St. Picture: Tony Gough



A car speeds on the footpath in CBD

‘DOUGHNUTS’ AT FLINDERS AND SWANSTON ST INTERSECTION

Onlookers first described a man hanging out of a window screaming as he performed “doughnuts” outside Flinders Street Station while a police helicopter hovered above.

Witness Rainbow Vekios described the man as having “dark hair, thin and of Middle Eastern appearance”.

“We saw a man hanging out the window and he was doing burn outs,” Ms Vekios said.

“He was screaming out to people.

“The police came and he started speeding down swanston street.

“I saw one person getting CPR and another being treated.”

Ms Vekios said she was terrified and feared the man would run her over.

“It’s all so hard to take in,” she said.

“It’s like something out of a movie. I’m very shaken up.”



Picture: Alex Coppel



Car drives in circles in CBD

Italian tourist Stefano Pavan said: “People were screaming because he was just going crazy.

“But it was like he was waiting for the police.”

Mr Pavan said the man was screaming and shouting and doing the burnouts close to where the horse drawn carriages are on Swanston Street.



📷 Picture: Herald Sun reader Renee Louise Bullen

BOURKE ST MALL CHAOS

Shopper Kylie Clark said she walked out of a Bourke St business to the sight of bodies flying through the air.

“It seemed to me they were being chased by an unmarked police car,” she said.

Joy Ramos said she had just got off a bus when she saw a man struck.

“It was terrifying. It’s the most upsetting thing I’ve ever seen,” she said.

One woman told the *Herald Sun* she watched the car run down a mother and her baby in a pram.

The woman, who did not give her name, said she feared the child was killed.

She said the car hit at least four people near the corner of William St while driving along the footpath.

A witness at the RACV Club said they had seen an up-ended pram at the scene.



📷 A pram up-ended on the road. Picture: Alex Coppel



📷 Onlookers tending to a victim who was hit by the speeding car.



📷 People helped victims as they waited for emergency services to arrive.

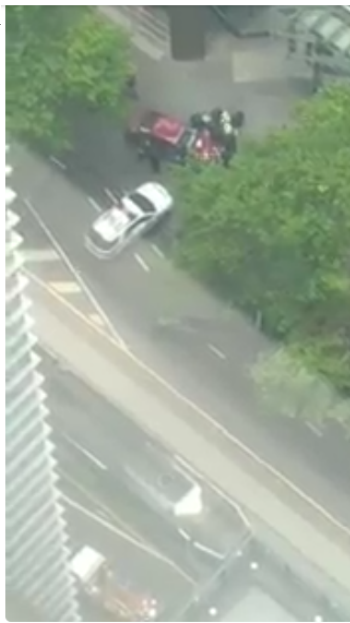
Street performer Jordan Doust, 22, was mid way through a magic show on Bourke St when the chaos started to unfold.

“He drove onto the footpath from the tram tracks and started to go for people. They were running and screaming and about 20 cops chasing up behind him,” he said.

“It was frantic and the people were trying to get out of the way.”

He said he had deliberately directed the car at the people.

“It was a deliberate attempt — there is no doubt about that,” Mr Doust said.



bwadamson
@BWAdamson



One man, who did not wish to be named, said he saw a red Commodore barrel along the Bourke St footpath near Elizabeth St while being pursued by police.

“He wasn’t stopping and people walking were trying to get away and he just kept going and collected people on his way,” he said.

The man said he saw at least 20 bodies strewn along the footpath and feared at least one might be dead.

City worker Luke McMahon was walking along Swanston St when a policeman jumped out of the way of the car and yelled for people to get out of the way too.

“A commodore did a U-turn and came up onto the sidewalk and drove past all the shops through a whole crowd of people”.

A girl who was almost hit was in shock and too distraught to speak as she was comforted by her mother and other people.





Angus Thompson
@AngusGthompson

Follow

Police chased a man and pinned him near the corner of swanston and lil collins. Keeps yelling. Not sure what about. At least 4 officers

6:04 AM - 20 Jan 2017

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📷 Police and emergency services tend to an injured person in Bourke St. Picture: David Crosling



📷 Emergency services at Bourke St Mall.

Witnesses said the vehicle travelled north on Swanston St then west into Bourke St Mall.

The driver then allegedly travelled up the hill towards Queen St, at times mounting footpath to strike pedestrians.

A homeless man said he tried to tend to a stricken woman hit on Bourke St.

“I was trying to hold the hand of a woman who went over his car,” he said.

“It was chaos.”

Catriona Rafael was in a first floor Bourke St salon between William and Queen St when she was stunned to see the emergency play out in the street beneath her.

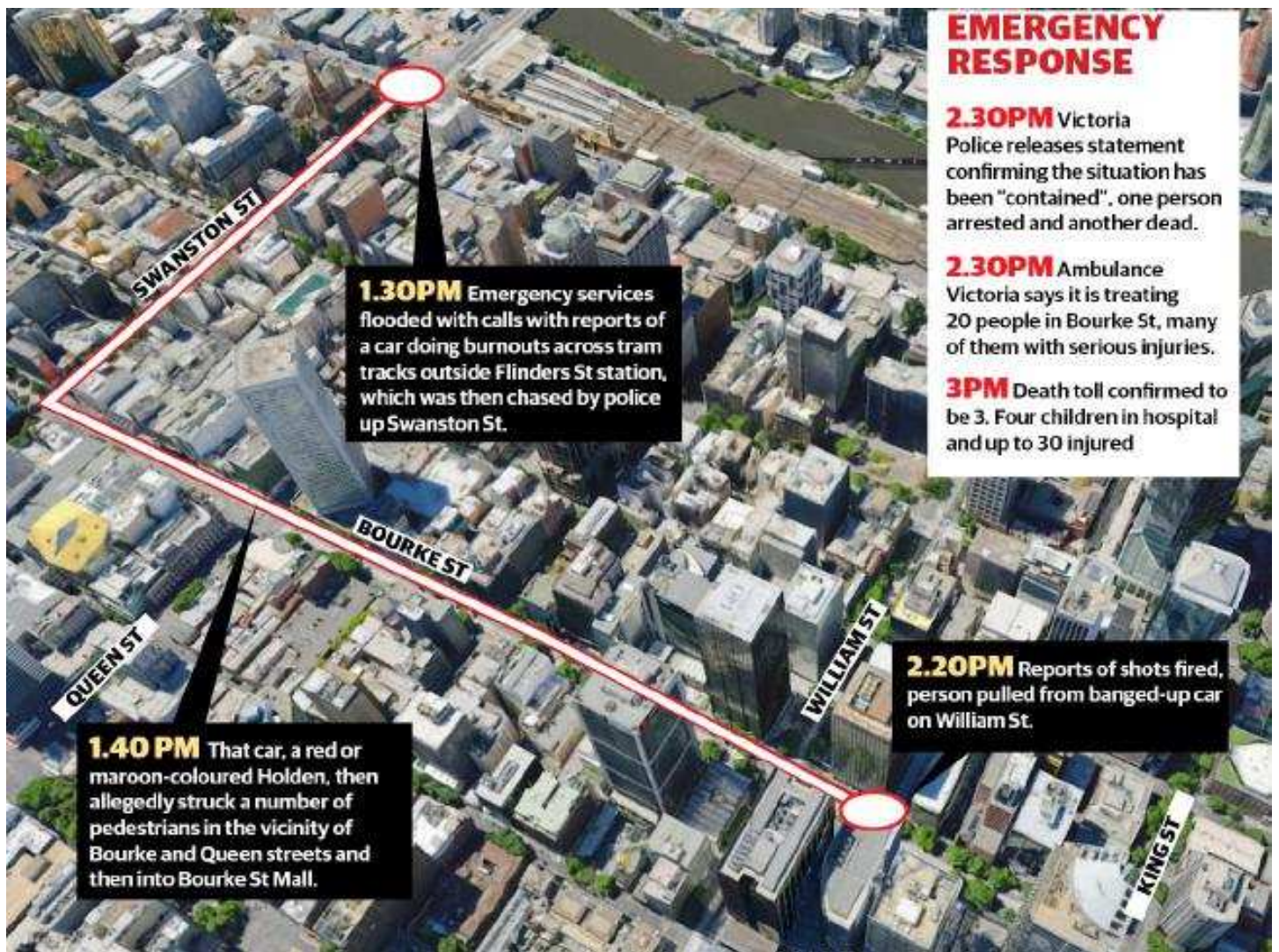
“We heard what sounded like gunshots then sirens started,” she said.

“There was a rally beaten up old red Commodore with its hazard lights on, on the sidewalk and there were 40-50 police around getting everyone off the tram stop.

“I could see there was at least one person on the ground being attended to by police. The person was still so I am not sure if it was a perpetrator or an injured person.”



📷 The man later crashed his car and was arrested by police. Picture: David Crosling



📷 How and where the events happened.

Jess Stewart, a barista at a cafe on the corner of William and Bourke St said scores of people flooded nearby shops to avoid the car.

“I was about to go home and I was just making a coffee before I left and then just a stampede of people rushed through the cafe doors. I can’t remember exactly what one of them said but someone was saying there was a guy with a gun or they heard shots fired and we all rushed down the back into the kitchen and down the fire exit at the back of the store and then just followed the corridor down to another shop into their office.”

“It was the Priceline on Little Collins ... everyone staff, members of the public other staff members from other shops everyone was just trying to take cover ... It was like sardines all squished in the Priceline office and then the emergency call over was saying we’re in lockdown make sure you lock the doors and we’re in lockdown.”



📷 The driver was eventually caught by police. Picture: David Caird



📷 Ambulance Victoria confirmed paramedics had reports multiple people had been hit by a car.

“And then we were just in there for a while and one of the girls was really upset and she just said that she heard shots fired and everyone was running ... she was in an office outfit and she obviously came from Bourke St — everyone was running from Bourke St.”

“There was a man laying up against a tree obviously his legs or something were hurt being attended to by two other girls. Bourke St is completely blocked off”

“It was the Priceline on Little Collins ... everyone staff, members of the public other staff members from other shops everyone was just trying to take cover ... It was like sardines all squished in the Priceline office and then the emergency call over was saying we’re in lockdown make sure you lock the doors and we’re in lockdown.”



📷 Paramedics and onlookers help the injured. Picture: Alex Coppel



📷 Crowds gathered after the chaos. Picture: Alex Coppel

German tourist Bert Knattsten was in the Bourke St Mall when the speeding car drove in.

“When I looked to the left, a car was travelling at high speed into the people,” he said.

“My wife was in a shop and I don’t know if she was hit by these people.”

Maya Kasrouni said; “we were just walking down the street and the car came and we noticed the police saying get out of the way” she said. “we went into a shop for safety”.

Mohamed Elyas had returned from lunch when he heard commotion outside his office.

“I looked out the window and saw police cars driving down the street, chasing this car,” he said.

Mr Elyas then saw about five people injured on the ground, tended to by other people and paramedics.

He was concerned about some of his colleagues, who were narrowly missed by the speeding car.

“He was almost hit, luckily he was further along the intersection,” he said.

“It’s unbelievable. You don’t expect this in Melbourne.”