

Sit back, relax and enjoy

DANIEL SHANDLER

MELBOURNE'S public transport industry has never been a laughing matter. But, now we can all sit back and enjoy the ride.

Bialik College alumni Ali Berg and Mich Kalus launched Books on the Rail last month in a hope to increase reading within a unique community initiative. The movement will see books left on Melbourne trains, trams and buses, waiting to be picked up and read, left and found for the next reader to enjoy.

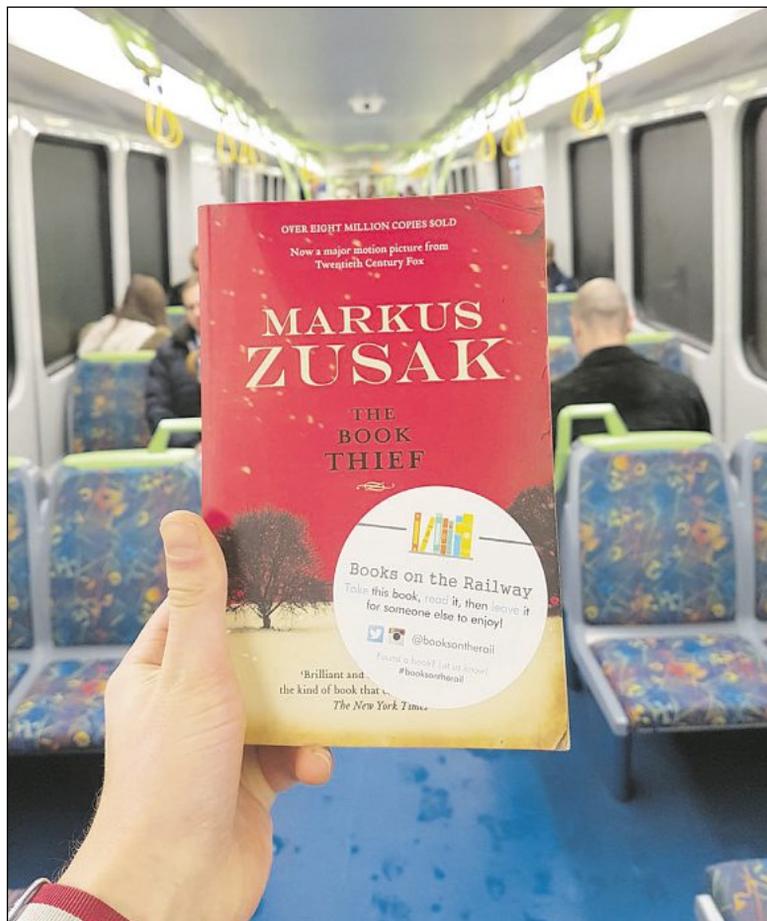
Copywriter Berg came across the idea in the UK, dubbed "Books on the Underground" and instantly thought Melbourne could and would benefit.

"[We were] leaving our own books or buying them from second-hand bookstores and charity shops," co-founder Mich Kalus said.

The initiative has gained momentum recently, with several publishers and authors including Pan Macmillan, Penguin Books, Andy Griffiths and Liane Moriarty jumping on board.

"The other day American author Catherine Ryan Hyde found us on Twitter and sent us a box of limited edition, signed copies of *Pay It Forward* to distribute. It was really exciting", Berg said.

Among the authors involved are best-selling writer Monica McInerney who was delighted the initiative was kicking off around Melbourne. "I'm delighted my *Alphabet Sisters* will soon be travelling on the trams and trains of Melbourne as part of the



"Take this book, read it, then leave it for someone else to enjoy!"

new and wonderful free Books on the Rail program".

Books are currently being dropped on all major train lines and central tram and bus lines, with the hope to extend to the V-Line in the not-too-distant future.

A reader can tell a book belongs to the initiative based on the sticker

on every title which reads "Take this book, read it, then leave it for someone else to enjoy!"

Visit www.booksontherail.com and request stickers to add to your own books. Or, keep your eyes peeled on Melbourne trains, trams and buses for Books on the Rail books.