

News

Newsletter of the
Public Transport Users Association

ISSN 0817 - 0347

Volume 21 No. 1 April 1997

Printed on recycled paper

388-409945
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Bold New Plan for the Outer East

The PTUA's campaign for better transport in the so-called 'Scoresby Corridor' is proceeding apace, with the release of a detailed plan that calls for a dramatic upgrade of public transport as an alternative to the proposed \$600 million Scoresby Freeway in Melbourne's outer eastern suburbs.

The plan, titled *Making Connections: Environmentally Friendly Transport for Melbourne's Outer East*, claims that a first-rate public transport system could be provided for less than half the cost of the proposed freeway. Key proposals include extending the Glen Waverley rail line to Rowville, the East Burwood tram line to Knox and duplication of the Hurstbridge line as far as Eltham. The costings used in the PTUA plan come from the government's own Scoresby Corridor study, and the plan is supported by a range of community and environment groups in the Outer East region.

The Scoresby Corridor transport study, currently being carried out by government-appointed consultants, is evaluating four

'options' for transport in the corridor, none of which would provide a real solution to the area's travel needs. The VicRoads officials overseeing the study refused to allow evaluation of an option that focussed on dramatically upgrading public transport as an alternative to the Scoresby Freeway. The PTUA has therefore assembled this 'fifth option' itself, so local councils and communities can see that there are cheaper, more environmentally friendly, options available. The Scoresby Corridor provides a unique opportunity for the community to demand world-class public transport.

A four-page summary of *Making Connections* is included as an insert to this edition of PTUA News, so that all PTUA members may inform themselves of the issues. The full plan is available for \$5 from the PTUA office. Copies of the plan have been sent to all local councillors and to community groups along the route of the proposed ring-freeway, from Heidelberg and Eltham through to Mornington.

Ring-Freeway Publicity Campaign Condemned

The PTUA has condemned the \$90,000 publicity campaign launched in support of the Scoresby Freeway last month by the unelected commissioners then running nine councils in the eastern suburbs. The PTUA considers this campaign to be misleading and a waste of ratepayers' money.

The 'Eastern Ring Road Committee'—comprising the municipalities of Greater Dandenong, Frankston, Kingston, Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse and Mornington Peninsula—recently released a publicity brochure which the PTUA considers dishonest, unprofessional and riddled with inaccuracies and contradictions. For example, it claims a ring-freeway "reduces pollution and greenhouse emissions by cutting travel distances," but then goes on to say a ring-freeway "increases worker mobility enabling people...to commute longer distances."

The leaflet also claims that the ring-freeway will produce savings in travel time worth millions of dollars, a claim the PTUA views as ridiculous. The claim is based on an out-of-date study carried out in 1995 for VicRoads (hardly an objective source). The study says that the savings in travel time would only be valid if the ring-freeway does not encourage people to travel more or make longer journeys (p.24). The leaflet, on the other hand, tells us that the freeway

will encourage people to travel longer distances. The congestion created by this extra travel destroys the supposed travel time savings from the freeway.

The most dishonest aspect of the leaflet in the PTUA's view is the claim that "most of the [freeway] will be built on Victorian Government land set aside in the 1960s." In fact, there is *no* land reserved for the most critical part of the ring-freeway, the 'missing link' from Ringwood to Greensborough across the Yarra Valley 'Green Wedge'. (This link is marked with a dotted line on the map in the brochure.) Any road through this area would destroy scenic areas, disturb the habitat of native animals, and ruin local residents' amenity. We believe the Committee is too scared to own up to this!

Residents should be angry that unelected commissioners and road engineers have committed \$90,000 of ratepayers' money to a dishonest propaganda sheet in the lead up to the return of elected councils. Why was the community not consulted? Why has the expenditure been incurred so soon before council elections? And why couldn't these commissioners and engineers find a cent to spend lobbying for sorely-needed improvements to local public transport? The brochure strikes us as an improper attempt to influence the results of council

elections in which transport policy has become a hot issue.

The PTUA is calling on the newly elected councils to withdraw from the Eastern Ring Road Committee and to support environmentally friendly transport solutions. PTUA members who live in these nine municipalities are urged to contact their local representatives and express their concern.

Transurban Costs Bid Fails!

Transurban's application for an order that the PTUA pay the costs of Phil Morey's Trade Practices case against the tollway was dismissed by the Federal Court on 7th February. Transurban has been ordered to pay the PTUA's legal costs of defending this part of the case. Costs were, as expected, awarded personally against Phil, who is appealing to the Full Federal Court.

Meanwhile, the appeal to the Federal Court against Transurban's taxation concessions has passed the first directions hearing at the Federal Court. A hearing date is expected shortly.

More next issue...

Public Transport in Private Hands

The Rhetoric and the Reality

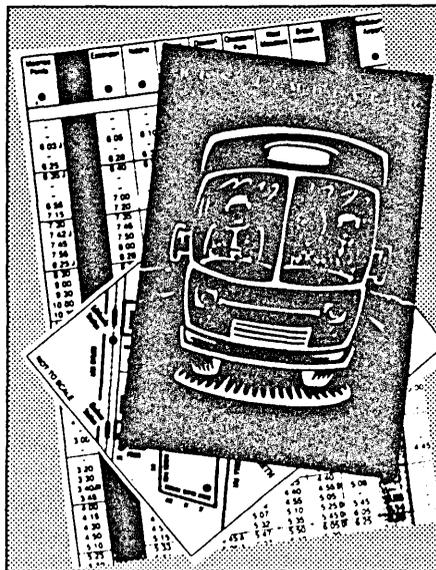
Anyone reading the papers in the last couple of weeks will have noticed the resurfacing of the debate over privatisation of public transport. This follows Premier Kennett's stated intention (some might say threat) to speed up the privatisation process, in the wake of strikes during the Grand Prix.

Now, there is nothing inherently bad about having public transport services run by private operators. Of much greater concern to the PTUA is how the Government goes about it. Whether public transport is privatised or not, there must be a clear commitment to passenger service, to retention of existing service levels, and—most emphatically—to overall integration of services. Rather than competing with one another to mutual detriment, operators should see things from the passenger's point of view and recognise that their real competition is the car.

Of course, it does seem sensible that public transport operators, seeking to increase patronage and thereby profits, would ensure that their services were frequent, reliable and properly integrated, to be as attractive as possible. This, at least, is the assumption that underlies most of the pro-privatisation rhetoric: give operators the leeway to provide more profitable services, and they will be led by the 'invisible hand' of economic rationalism to provide better services for passengers.

In the past, however, this 'common sense' has eluded most operators in Melbourne, public as well as private. The history of public transport in Melbourne has been one of operators continually trying to poach passengers from one another, in the belief that they were serving a fixed (indeed captive) market. Instead, the main effect was to drive passengers away. Lacking the sort of overall coordination that exists with the road system, public transport was driven into a vicious cycle of reducing patronage and service cuts. One private operator after another was driven out of business. Indeed, the survival of Melbourne's remaining private bus operators is almost certainly attributable to the introduction of multimodal fares in 1983 (which coincided with a sudden increase in patronage on all services).

History has a way of repeating itself, and this is increasingly apparent with today's private operators. Prominent among these is the National Bus Company, which bought most of the Public Transport Corporation's bus routes when they were put out to tender by the Kennett Government. In former times, these routes had been operated by the



Tramways Board, which—ironically—had itself acquired them from a private operator who went bankrupt in the 1960s.

Although National has improved services on a few routes since it took them over from the PTC, most of its routes (including its busiest) have had significant service cuts, as the accompanying box shows. We seem to be heading for the same vicious cycle once again!

But this is not all. Despite offering passengers poorer service than the PTC, it appears National is planning on poaching passengers from the rail system. According to *The Age* on 20 March, National's general manager is promising express bus services along the newly extended Eastern Freeway from Nunawading to the city, with a

...continued Page 3

National Cuts Services Again

Professor Tony Richardson of RMIT's Transport Research Centre wrote in support of privatising public transport in *The Age* recently. He cited as evidence the fact that the National Bus Company has dramatically changed and improved the service it inherited from The Met. The result has apparently been a happier bunch of customers. Goodness—anyone would think Professor Richardson worked for National! (In fact, the Transport Research Centre has done work for National, a fact which was not disclosed in the Professor's *Age* piece.)

But what is actually happening on the road, or at the bus stop? Let's take a closer look. The 1997 timetables issued recently by National show further service cuts on National's busiest route, No. 200 from Bulleen to the City via Carlton. Last year, weekday off-peak services were cut from every 10 to every 15 minutes. Now, Saturday services have been cut from 15 to 20 minutes during the day and from 20 to 30 minutes in the evening. Sunday services have been cut from every 10/20 minutes, to a confusing 12/24 minutes. Services have also been cut on the second-busiest National route, No. 250-251 to La Trobe University and Northland. Saturday daytime services have been cut from a combined 10-minute frequency to 12/13

minutes, while again Saturday evening services are cut from 20 to 30 minutes.

Some suburban routes have also seen cuts. For example, service on Route 291 (Box Hill to Heidelberg) has been cut from 40 minutes to hourly on Sundays; the same reduction in service has occurred on Route 279 (Box Hill to Templestowe), and on this route the last bus on Sundays has been deleted from the timetable. Sunday services have also been cut on Routes 201-202, which operate along Belmore Road, Balwyn. A combined frequency of one bus every 30 minutes has been cut to one bus per hour, and the last bus from East Kew now leaves at 8:55 pm, compared with 10:15 previously.

The inescapable conclusion is that *all* the above routes are now operating at a *lower* level of service than when they were run by the Public Transport Corporation.

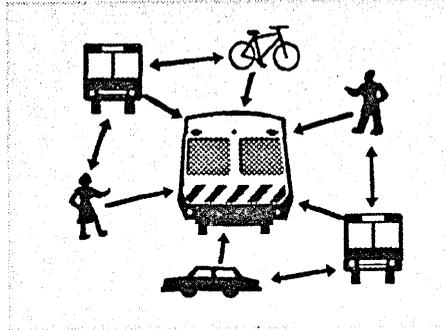
PTUA member David Warne has prepared the table below, charting the decline in evening service on the Templestowe-City route since National took over.

David also points out that while the PTC bus division, and before it the Tramways Board, had a timetable at every stop, most stops now have no timetable at all; in many cases the timetable holders are intact, but have been painted over!

Is this what economic rationalists mean when they say privatised transport is more customer focussed??

Last buses	1993 (PTC)	1994 (Nat'l)	1995 (Nat'l)	1997 (Nat'l)
To city (Mon-Fri)	10.38 pm	10.17	7.26	7.26
To city (Sat)	8.11	10.17	7.26	7.24
To city (Sun)	8.10	4.53	5.26	5.24
To Tstowe (M-F)	11.34	11.40	11.10	11.10
To Tstowe (Sat)	11.40	11.40	11.10	11.10
To Tstowe (Sun)	9.10	6.20	6.10	6.10

Making CONNECTIONS



Environmentally Friendly Transport for Melbourne's Outer East

There are serious transport problems in the outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne. Public transport services are appalling. Two or three cars are needed in every household just to get around. Major roads carry large volumes of traffic. Air pollution is approaching critical levels in many areas. And the problems are getting worse.

The road lobby tells us that the only solution is to build more roads. It wants to spend \$600 million on the Scoresby Freeway, as part of a multi-million dollar ring freeway around Melbourne. This will encourage more people to drive, and encourage development that can only be reached by cars. These are exactly the policies that created the mess in the first place!

There is another way. It is **Environmentally Friendly Transport – EFT**. Upgrading public transport to 'world's best' standards will meet the needs of local residents and businesses, and contribute to a healthier environment.

The Scoresby Corridor Study — where is Option 5?

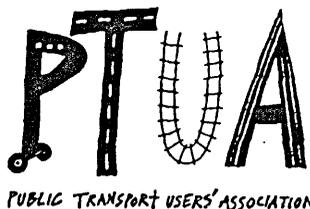
The Department of Infrastructure is undertaking a detailed study to assess the options for developing transport in the 'Scoresby Corridor' covering the outer eastern suburbs from Ringwood to Frankston. This study considers four options which, despite talk of 'integrated transport', focus overwhelmingly on road projects (particularly the Scoresby Freeway), along with public transport 'improvements' which are mostly either minor or unnecessary. The financial costs involved are high – around \$600 million – and the costs to the environment and to quality of life still greater.

We believe none of these options are attractive, whether from the perspective of EFT or even a more narrow economic viewpoint. There is currently little demand for long-distance north-south travel, such as from Ringwood to Frankston or even to Dandenong. Any major north-south development will be a waste of

money and an *environmental disaster*, whether it takes the form of a freeway, a main road or even a rail line. Much more could be done for less cost to improve transport in this region, as will be made clear below.

The document you are reading outlines Option 5 – the EFT option, encompassing the sort of public transport improvements that people would actually use. Costings for such an option have already been determined by the Government's own consultants, and are lower than for the options being pushed by the road lobby. Nevertheless, our transport bureaucrats have refused to consider this option as part of the Scoresby Corridor study.

An EFT approach to transport in the Scoresby Corridor can be made to work, and will cost less than building white elephants like the Scoresby Freeway. Full details of a comprehensive plan, covering every municipality in the Outer East region, are available as a separate document – see the back page.



The Scoresby Freeway: problem or solution?

The road lobby wants to convince us that there is a need for a new North-South freeway though Melbourne's eastern suburbs.

The argument is that the freeway is needed to provide for cross regional, North-South travel. The road lobby claims that cross-suburban journeys (such as Ringwood to Dandenong) are as common, or even more common, than radial journeys to or towards the City (such as Ringwood to Camberwell). Since cross-suburban travel is hard to provide for by public transport, it is argued, freeways must be built to handle the traffic.

The truth is actually the opposite: trips from North to South, or vice versa, are tiny in number by comparison with radial trips to or from the city, and short distance trips in local areas. Figures showing a predominance of radial and local travel were compiled from the census and surveys as part of the Government's own study, but were not mentioned in the summary that was released for community consultation. Why not?

Radial and local trips are exactly the types that are best catered for by environmentally friendly transport, as opposed to freeways. On the other hand, building the Scoresby Freeway would encourage lots of long-distance north-south travel and *create* an environmental problem with no solution. Why would anyone want to do this?

A cause for congestion

If most journeys within the outer east are radial and local, as the figures plainly show, it is fair to ask what is the source of the congestion on north-south roads such as Stud Road and Springvale Road. Champions of the Scoresby Freeway point to such roads as 'proof' of the need for a north-south freeway. Closer examination reveals, however, that the freeway would do little or nothing to relieve the demand on these roads.

Congestion on north-south roads is chiefly a consequence of Melbourne's hierarchical road layout. Consider one of the key traffic generators in this region: the Knox City Centre at the corner of Stud Road and the Burwood Highway. It is evident that, whether or not the Scoresby Freeway existed, a local traveller approaching Knox City from the south would have no choice but to use Stud Road. The same reasoning applies to other major trip generators in the region, like Stud Park in Rowville.

Similarly, most travellers to the inner suburbs from the Outer East would have to travel part of the way along Stud or Springvale Road in order to reach the nearest radial arterial road (such as Burwood Highway or the South Eastern Freeway). This observation is confirmed by studies carried out by the RACV.

Economic benefits?

Some unelected council commissioners have suggested the Scoresby Freeway is essential to create economic growth. This argument is inconsistent with the evidence. The majority of Melbourne's freeways are in the northern and western suburbs, the same area that has the greatest unemployment. Knox's comparatively high job growth has been achieved with no freeways at all.

Trying to attract investment through freeways and 'noxious industry zones' is an outdated 1950s-style approach. Investors these days prefer livable cities with clean air and attractive environments.

Preparing for Detroit

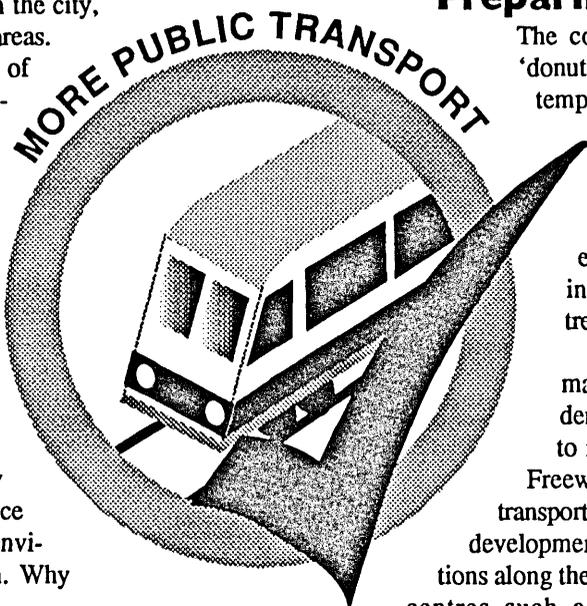
The core of Detroit – America's classic 'donut city' – is now clinically dead. Attempts to revive it have failed. But how did Detroit's centre become a wasteland? According to British transport expert J.M. Thomson, it was through building freeways, especially ring-freeways, and shifting development from existing centres to outer-suburban 'edge cities'.

What happened in Detroit and many other American cities by accident, Melbourne's road lobby propose to introduce by design. The Scoresby Freeway is to form part of an 'integrated transport and land-use corridor', meaning that development will be encouraged in new locations along the freeway and diverted from existing centres such as Dandenong, Frankston, Glen Waverley, Boronia, Knox and Ringwood. Although the decline of these centres is not advanced as an explicit goal of freeway development, history suggests that this will be the inevitable result, just as in Detroit and Los Angeles.

The missing link

VicRoads intends the Scoresby Freeway to be part of a continuous ring-freeway around the whole of Melbourne. This means building a freeway link across the Yarra Valley 'Green Wedge' to the Western Ring Road at Greensborough, cutting either through Eltham and Warrandyte, or through the Yarra Flats where the Heidelberg School painters once worked.

This freeway connection was cancelled by Premier Hamer in the 1970s after massive public protest. However, road planners have not accepted this decision and have been trying to sneak the ring-freeway back onto the agenda ever since; documents obtained from VicRoads under Freedom of Information include these two proposed routes. Despite assurances that no link will be built in the 'foreseeable future', the construction of the Scoresby Freeway will inevitably lead to increased pressure to join the roads together. *The only way to save the Green Wedge is by stopping the Scoresby Freeway!*



The alternative: world-class public transport

We cannot reduce congestion by building more roads since immediately we get more traffic to fill them up to the same speed as before. The only way to reduce congestion is to introduce better public transport facilities which reduce the number of people who travel by car on the roads.

—Prof. Martin Mogridge, University College London.

At present, people living in Melbourne's Outer East find public transport unattractive and inconvenient. It does not take people where they want to go at the times they want to travel. When services do run they are slow, infrequent, uncoordinated, unreliable and frequently unsafe. It is not surprising that most people use their cars, even for trips to the central city.

International best practice

Expressions like 'best practice' are modern-day clichés, but hiding beneath the rhetoric is a potentially valuable concept. We should seek to learn from the best in the world, benefiting from others' success and failure.

In most parts of the Western world, people are having second thoughts about the 'predict and provide' approach to transport planning, in which road engineers predict increases in traffic, and then provide new roads that bring the predicted increases in traffic into existence. The quote above sums up the growing consensus: the way to best provide for increasing travel demand is through excellent public transport services, not more roads.

Many cities around the world have positive evidence to support this consensus. Toronto, a city similar in size and shape to Melbourne, runs its services every ten minutes or better until well after midnight, charges half the price of the equivalent service in Melbourne and recovers 70% of its costs compared to Melbourne's 35%. This has been achieved through sensible planning and a recognition that public transport's real competition is private cars, not other public transport operators.

Could it happen here?

The most widely believed, and therefore most dangerous, road lobby myth is that Melbourne is too spread out for public transport to work. This is an old story that dates back to the first major American freeway studies. It has been repeated so often that even some environmentalists and urban planners believe it.

The story seems credible: after all, it's obvious that Melbourne is more spread out than English and European cities. Melbourne is now, however, more densely populated than most US and Canadian cities. In fact, because Melbourne's initial suburban growth was based around trains and trams, rather than the car, the form of development is more 'public transport friendly', with a strong central business district and many suburban centres (such as Dandenong and Ringwood) near railway stations.

Do we need to give up cars?

Of course not. Cars are here to stay; we need to learn to live with them in a way that keeps our city livable. All that is needed is to shift a minority of car trips from the car to walking, cycling or public transport. Many cities renowned for their successful public transport have higher car ownership rates than Melbourne. High car ownership does not mean that people will never use public transport; it simply means they don't *have* to use public transport, and will not use it unless the quality of service is acceptable.

High quality public transport provides the sort of go-anywhere-anytime convenience that attracts people to cars. It requires a fully integrated network with short waiting times and easy transfers. Because this has never been seen in Melbourne, many people have difficulty imagining it, or believing it possible.

How much will it cost?

Creating a world class public transport system in the Outer East requires investment of around \$250 million on extensions, interchanges and new rolling stock. This cost (from the Government's own study) is significant, but is *less than half* that of the Scoresby Freeway. Cost recovery would also improve and operating deficits plummet, due to increased efficiencies resulting from higher patronage. EFT would therefore save the community money, as well as delivering a public transport system that better meets community needs.

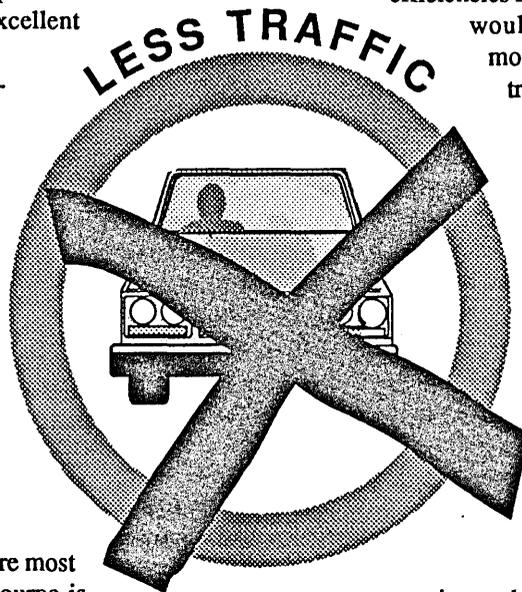
How we do it

The key to good public transport is *service*. Rail services need to be upgraded to provide a fast and *frequent* service. No more should people wait half an hour or even longer on a cold station platform for a train. From 6am right through to 1am or later, trains should run every ten minutes. No ifs or buts.

Buses shouldn't wander all over back streets, but run on the main road grid and feed into railway stations serving major shopping and employment centres on the way. Buses should run on *all* main roads every ten minutes and connect with trains and other buses at convenient interchanges.

Our fares, by far the highest in Australia, must be dropped to a reasonable level. Toronto's fares are set at only half the level of ours, but meet a far higher proportion of the system's costs, due to the high patronage that first-class public transport can attract.

Strategic extensions can be made to the train and tram system to fill in the remaining gaps (especially Rowville, Knox and Doncaster), for a fraction of the Scoresby Freeway's \$600 million price tag.



Making Melbourne marvellous

Melbourne is at a turning point. Three decades of road-oriented transport planning have created a tidal wave of traffic and catastrophic decline of public transport.

Many of the attractive features of Melbourne – parks, historic gardens, a strong city centre, a ‘public transport friendly’ urban form – have survived, but are now under serious threat. The current freeway explosion, of which the Scoresby Freeway is a key part, will destroy them, changing Melbourne into yet another polluted, sprawling, car-dominated mess like Detroit or Los Angeles.

There is a better way. Melbourne can justify its title of ‘world’s most livable city’ and turn away from the failed 1950s transport planning approach. The lifestyle we have come to expect can be accommodated and our environment protected. With an extensive public transport infrastructure needing only minor additions, and public transport friendly ‘radial’ travel patterns, Melbourne is ready for a painless, inexpensive transition to a sustainable, livable and more equitable city. We can even save money in the process!

This leaflet is a summary of a more detailed report prepared by the Public Transport Users Association. Copies are available for \$5 including postage.

Order by phone on (03) 9650 7898, or send a cheque (with name and address) to:

Making Connections Orders, PTUA, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000.

Please ask about our other publications detailing the public transport alternative.

You can help

By signalling its intention to spend up to \$600 million on transport in the Outer East, the State government has created a never-to-be-repeated chance for a change in direction. The provision of funding for the elimination of the Boronia level crossing shows that community pressure can achieve results, particularly in the Outer East, which has most of Melbourne’s critical ‘swinging seats’. We have a unique opportunity to create a better future.

What you can do

- Lobby local councillors. Tell them you want councils to support environmentally friendly transport in preference to unnecessary and destructive freeways.
- Write to the Premier (Jeff Kennett) and Opposition leader (John Brumby) demanding better transport policies.
- Lobby local MPs: write to them, ring, or visit. (See ‘Parliament of Victoria’ in the White Pages.)
- Write letters to local and state newspapers (The Age, Herald-Sun).
- Get your local church, community service organisation, or residents’ group involved.
- Join groups campaigning for better transport and a better environment. (See ‘Contact Details’ below.)
- Sign the petition; get friends and neighbours to sign. Copies of the petition are available from the groups listed here.

Contact details

Public Transport Users Association

Campaigns for better public transport across Victoria.

- Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000.
- Phone: 9650 7898.

Knox Environment Society

Supporting an environmentally friendly City of Knox.

- Phone: 9763 7017.

Anti Ring Road Organisation (Warrandyte / Eltham)

Campaigning to save Eltham and Warrandyte from a six-lane ring freeway.

- Phone: 9844 3454.

Greater Dandenong Planning & Environment Coalition

Representing over 20 groups around Dandenong.

- Phone: 9547 2521.

Kingston Conservation and Environment Coalition

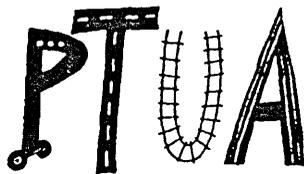
Representing 20 environment groups.

- Phone: 9580 2018.

Koonung–Mullum Forestway Association

Working for alternatives to the extension of the Eastern Freeway through Mitcham and Ringwood.

- Phone: 9898 2220



PUBLIC TRANSPORT USERS' ASSOCIATION

247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000.

Phone: (03) 9650 7898

Keeping in touch...

PTUA office

Ground Floor, 247 Flinders Lane, Melb.
Telephone: (03) 9650 7898
(Office volunteers are earnestly sought!)

Committee Meetings

Second Thursday of each month.
Please call the office for details.

Membership Enquiries

Graeme Gibson: (03) 9650 7898

World Wide Web

Our home page is on Vicnet at
<http://www.vicnet.net.au/~ptua/firstpt.htm>

Committee Members

Paul Mees—President
Josephine Connellan—Vice President
Les Chandra—Secretary
James Hoffman—Treasurer
John McPherson—Assistant Secretary
Patrick O'Connor—Media Liaison
Peter Dann Demetri Pimenides
Alan Hardie Domenica Settle
Mary Jamieson Christina Sindt
Phil Morey Gerry Warren
Anthony Morton

STOP PRESS

DISASTROUS BUS PLANS

As reported in *The Age* (5 April Page 3), outer metropolitan bus services will be reduced under new contracts being drawn up by the State Government.

PTUA president Paul Mees said the benchmarks used made the worst-run routes the new industry standard.

NOW is the time for us to contact politicians and the media to tell them that further reductions in bus services will not be tolerated.

Upfield line to close despite assurances

The State Government has announced that the Upfield rail line will close for a minimum of six months (May to November 1997) between Flemington Bridge and North Melbourne. This is despite a commitment given to the PTUA and other groups last November that the line would be kept open during the construction of the City Link tollway.

The Government says the closure is for safety reasons, citing an (unreleased) WorkCover document relating to the construction, which would be above the line for about 1.5 kilometres. An alternative service has been offered which would take passengers from Flemington Bridge to Newmarket on the Broadmeadows line, adding at least 15 minutes to the journey.

The PTUA believes any closure of the Upfield line is both unacceptable and unnecessary, and is supporting the campaign by the Upgrade Upfield Coordinating Committee and the City of Moreland to resist the closure. There are many reasons why the Government should reconsider:

- the Government has never closed a road to build a freeway over it, and has rarely (if ever) done so with a rail line;
- there are safer alternatives for the freeway construction (built alongside, or with a safety canopy over the line);
- the decision can easily be construed as a cost-cutting exercise on Transurban's behalf, in effect a hidden subsidy;
- despite Transurban's promise of free travel, the community is paying the cost in travel delays, overcrowded trams, lack of mobility and an increase in road traffic;
- the builder, Baulderstone-Hornibrook, states in its PR material that construction will have "minimal impact" on PTC services
- the Government is committed to a \$25 million upgrade of the Upfield line, and risks a heavy loss on this investment due to loss in patronage resulting from such a protracted closure.

For further information, or to get involved in the campaign, contact Nik Dow on 9383 2461.

(from Page 2)

scheduled running time of 38 minutes. The freeway terminal at the Nunawading end is only a few hundred metres from the railway station, from which peak hour express trains reach the city in just 25 minutes. Far from being the service innovation it is claimed to be, this is simply a return to the same old pattern. All historical evidence suggests it is doomed to fail.

The news isn't all that rosy overseas, either. As Paul Mees reports in *The Age* on 19th March, Britain has been particularly zealous in its sell-off of public transport, and has had particularly disastrous results. Privatised services there have suffered huge patronage declines and much greater increases in fares than those which remained public. *BBC World News* reported recently that the private operator Stagecoach has been fined £2 million for cancelling 39 train services per day without informing users. (Stagecoach has expressed interest in buying public transport services in Melbourne.)

Such news confirms the PTUA's fears about privatisation and competition in public transport. Instead of coordinating with the rest of the public transport system to compete with the car, the tendency is to try to poach patrons from other forms of public transport. This is seen as perfectly healthy behaviour by economists and others who fail to see the difference between owning a public transport service and owning a TV network. It is doubtful whether these same economists would advocate giving free rein to civil engineering companies to build competing tollways, which is a much closer analogy.

Tony Morton

Witnesses needed for Ticket Vending Machine attacks

TransAdelaide and the Transit Division are asking for public help to track down the people responsible for a recent spate of attacks on Ticket Vending Machines inside TransAdelaide trains.

It's the second time within a year that the machines have been targeted by groups.

In March and June this year, when the first attacks took place, a special Transit Response Group was established by police officers within the Transit Division.

The offenders were quickly identified and a number of youths and adults were arrested and charged with various offences.

Now the attacks have started again with most of them occurring on the Outer Harbor line.

The Transit Response Group is again investigating the matter and TransAdelaide is using hidden video cameras to try to capture the offenders on tape.

It's believed that a number of people must have witnessed some of these attacks and TransAdelaide and the Transit Division are now asking for those people to come forward.

If anybody has information about these attacks which could help, please contact TransAdelaide Security on 8218 2622 or the Transit Division on 8303 0500.

Left: This excerpt comes from *Rail News*, December 1996

Copy Deadline for the next PTUA News is 23rd May 1997

Newsletter Production Team:

Tony Morton, Tony Fuery and Dorothy Cooke
Printed by Complete Print: Johnston St. Abbotsford
Our thanks to the dedicated mailout team

PTUA News

Newsletter of the Public Transport Users' Association
Print Post: Publication No. PP 331088/00009
If undeliverable, return to:
PTUA Office, Ground Floor, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000

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A Warm Welcome to All Our New Members

Anti Ring Road Organisation

Public Meeting

**Wednesday 30 April at 8pm
the Great Hall at Montsalvat,
Hillcrest Avenue, Eltham**

“No Ringroad Through the Green Wedge”

Speakers:

Jason Torrance,

UK anti-freeway campaigner

Nick Low

Senior Lecturer, University of Melbourne

For details phone 9844 3454

Country Update

Rail Link to Echuca Reopens (well, sort of)

As mentioned briefly in our last issue, Echuca has regained its weekend train service as of 13 September 1996, after a 17-year absence. The train to Echuca via Bendigo leaves Melbourne every Friday evening and returns late on Sunday afternoon. On holiday weekends an extra return train is provided on Monday. Reading between the lines, the PTUA infers that the train will be of greater benefit to Melbourne-based tourists than to locals, but welcomes the service improvement nonetheless.

New V/Line Services to Regional Cities

The Transport Minister also announced the extension of Sprinter services to Albury-Wodonga, more weekend services to Ballarat, Bendigo and Seymour, and additional weekday services to Ballarat and Kyneton. With the announcement comes a formal acknowledgement that the Sprinter services to Ballarat and Bendigo have contributed to increased patronage—something the PTUA could have foretold in advance!

Bairnsdale Trains an Election Issue

In the leadup to municipal elections in East Gippsland, the Save Our Train group surveyed all candidates on questions of community groups, the role of local government and the importance of a rail passenger service to the East Gippsland region. Eighteen of the twenty-six candidates responded, all supporting the return of the train. For more details contact Save Our Train on (03) 5156 0517.

Adelaide Standard Gauge ‘Goat Track’

An article by Roderick Smith in *Rail News Victoria* (December 1996) argues that the Melbourne to Adelaide gauge standardisation has not fulfilled its original aims as part of the One Nation programme. According to the article: “the route has been designed for yesterday’s standards... and suffers from permanent and semi-permanent design deficiencies... at the outset, punctuality was poor.” The method of construction has meant that both standard-gauge and broad-gauge services in Victoria, and the Melbourne-Adelaide ‘Overland’, are subject to speed restrictions, hence to lower operating efficiencies.

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