

News

Newsletter of the
Public Transport Users Association

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PTUA Annual General Meeting

Your chance to meet the Minister

**7:30pm Wednesday
18 October 1995**

**4th Floor Ross House,
247 Flinders Lane
Melbourne**

**Guest Speaker: Hon. Alan Brown,
Minister for Public Transport**

See page 2 for nomination form

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Keeping in touch

PTUA office, Ground Floor,
247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne.
Telephone: (03) 9650 7898

Committee meetings

The Committee meets monthly at
6.15 pm. at 247 Flinders Lane. For
details please call the office.

Membership

Graeme Gibson: (03) 9650 7898

Committee members

Paul Mees – President
Neva Finch – Vice-President
Leslie Chandra – Secretary
John McPherson – Ass't. Secretary
Tim Grant – Treasurer
Patrick O'Connor – Media Liaison

Gracy Geradi
Alan Hardie
Tim Hoffmann
Christine Hooper
Richard Todd
Gerry Warren

The Koonung Mullum Forestway Association

TRAIN RALLY

10.30am Sun Oct 8 Centre of Alexander Pde, cnr. Wellington St Collingwood (Melway 44 C3)

Speakers will include Bill Russell, author of a government study into Eastern corridor transport options. After the speakers we will catch our own train to Doncaster stopping at our own stations along the way. There will be a picnic at the end.

MULLUM MULLUM FESTIVAL

Creek carnival - October 21 & 22

Two days of music and food, working bees and workshops, talks and walks, information and relaxation. Hillcrest Reserve, Lisbeth Ave, Mitcham.

For more information contact KMFA hotline 0055 39925 or Sue Toole 9899 7550

Nominations for PTUA Committee

The current election procedure allows for the AGM to elect a President, Secretary and Treasurer and up to nine committee members. Nominations must be on the form below, and signed by the nominator and the candidate, both of whom must be members of the PTUA. Nomination forms must be received at the PTUA office (ground floor, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne) by hand or by mail by 4.00pm, Friday 13 October, 1995. Nominations will not be called for at the AGM unless fewer than 12 nominations are received by the above date.

Nomination Form

I, _____
of _____
nominate _____
of _____
for election to the position of:
☐ Committee member ☐ President ☐ Secretary ☐ Treasurer

Trams – ideas on better services

PTUA member John Prideaux wrote to the Committee recently with some intriguing ideas for improving the Bundoora and St. Georges Road tram services.

Other short extensions would also boost the usefulness and patronage of a number of tram routes across Melbourne. Tram (or bus) routes that pass by shops and services that people need to access will obviously perform better for passengers and the accountants.

1. Bundoora / St Georges Rd / Nicholson St Trams – proposal from John Prideaux.

In summary Bundoora/City trams would speed up by approximately 10 minutes by using the Dundas Street rail hump to access St Georges Road and a new link (approx 650 metres) along Park Street to Nicholson St North Carlton. About 2/3 of this total route would be in a median for fast unobstructed travel. A number of

permutations of other tram routes in the area would be possible with interchange at Dundas St and even interchange to rail at Thornbury station. High frequency and reliability would need to underpin any service changes. Contact John on 9478 5206 (h) for more information.

2. Mont Albert Tram No 42 – extension to Box Hill Central

One of the most necessary extensions would continue this tram service 2.25 kms to Box Hill Central. Preferably the tram would terminate within the Box Hill complex above the rail station. Contact the *Extend The 42 Campaign*, David Sauer 9890.9219(h)

3. Waverley Road No 3 Tram – extension from Darling Road to East Malvern Station.

A one km. extension to East Malvern Station would particularly benefit student travel to Caulfield Campus of Monash University

Boronia – citizens demand better public transport

The PTUA held one of the most successful local public meetings in its 19 years history. Over 110 people were present including three local Liberal members (all from marginal electorates!), aspiring candidates from Labour and other political parties as well as many business men and women and local citizens.

Our president Paul Mees chaired the meeting and gave a presentation comparing public transport in Toronto and Vancouver with that of Melbourne. Architect Peter Dann spoke about the proposal for a rail/bus interchange for Boronia shopping centre (as detailed in our last newsletter). Following a lively question and answer session, there was overwhelming support for the undergrounding of the rail line and for public transport improvements in general.

A local PTUA group has been formed as a result of the meeting to continue community lobbying for a more integrated transport in the area centred on the Boronia interchange. To join the group and help with the lobbying, please contact Anthony Fitzgerald, Tel: 9754 3488.

PTUA President replies (See letters pages 6 & 7.)

Perhaps the briefest response I can make to the concerns of both Sir Rupert Hamer and Bruce Wadson, is that they are answered in detail in the PTUA's "Wrong Way Go Back" booklet. There we show that freeways generally do not produce the benefits claimed for them, because of the additional traffic they generate, much of it at the expense of public transport.

A word on "balance". The 1969 Melbourne Transport Plan, which proposed building 500 kilometres of freeway, and which was severely pruned by Sir Rupert Hamer in 1973, stated in its introduction: "balanced transport is our

only hope". Every Melbourne freeway plan since has also claimed to support "balance". Cities in Europe and North America that put their transport policies on an environmentally sustainable footing have done so by abandoning the slogan of "balance", and giving *preference* to environmentally benign forms of transport. The recent Vancouver long-range transport strategy, for example, speaks of "investing with a bias toward transit".

Many people would like to have an American-style road network and first-class public transport, but we cannot. The reason why it is not possible to find a city

that has both is that the two goals cannot be achieved together: there is an inevitable "trade-off", and the PTUA unabashedly prefers the second goal. In any event, the only large city with completely uncongested roads is Detroit, and that's because the place has become so unattractive it now has little economic activity.

Although the PTUA has never sought to oppose all new road projects (we kept silent on the Western Ring-Road, the Springvale Bypass and country road upgrades, to mention some recent examples), we certainly do oppose the current government's freeway-building frenzy, which runs the risk of turning Melbourne into another Detroit. *Paul Mees.*

Bike theft at stations — an easy solution

by Alan Parker

Another 350 bicycles were stolen from Melbourne suburban stations in 1994 and the number of bike/rail patrons has dropped to the lowest level since 1972. When Labor came to power in 1982 there were 2000 bicycles parked at stations. By the time Alan Brown arrived there were 1000. Now we are down to around 600.

Adult bicycles sales have increased by 9% per year since the mid 1970s but the number of bicycles parked at rail stations has declined by 9% per year due to uncontrolled bicycle theft.

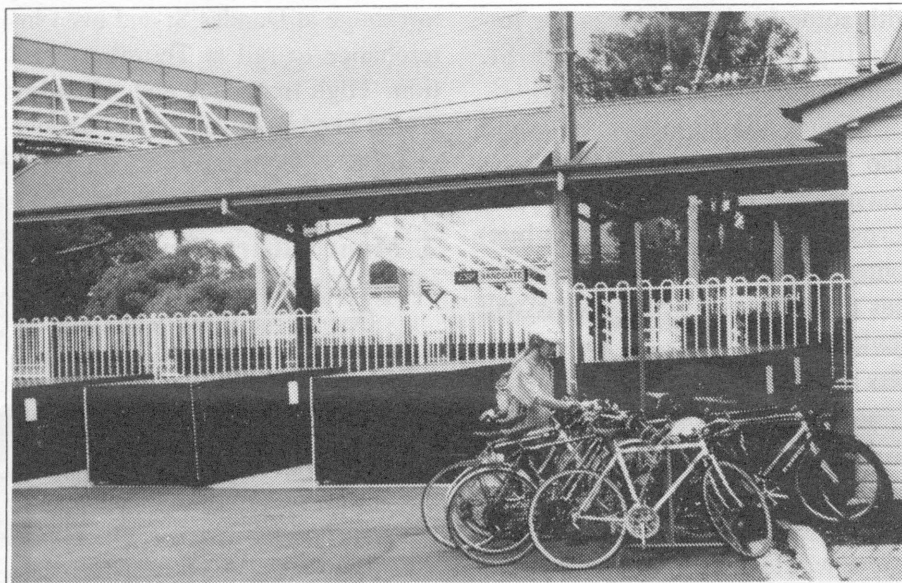
In its election Transport Policy the Victorian Coalition stated "The coalition is not prepared to let the lawbreakers continue to ruin the public transport system" and will be "contracting with the private sector to provide secure parking for bicycles" but nothing has been done.

The Victorian and NSW rail authorities discriminate against cyclists because they spend very little on bicycle security.

Consider this:— in three years the smaller Brisbane rail system has provided more bicycles lockers than in both Sydney and Melbourne together over the last 12 years. The rail managers who choose to ignore the problem have given the Minister for Public Transport Alan Brown the mushroom treatment, as they did to previous Transport ministers.

540 Free Bike Lockers in Brisbane

Since Alan Brown became Minister for Public Transport here, the transport authority in Queensland has put 540 bike lockers on Brisbane sta-



The safe and sensible alternative — free bicycle lockers in Brisbane.

tions and established a sensible policy for making better use of expensive car parking facilities by encouraging motorists who park cars at railway stations to use a "free bicycle locker instead".

I talked with Queensland Transport officials responsible and spent a day inspecting the bike locker installations. There is an awareness that bicycle theft is a serious deterrent to bicycle access at all stations particularly the unstaffed stations.

There is no charge for lockers. This is to encourage bicycle use in preference to cars which makes good economic sense as car parking spaces cost up to \$8,000 each, but installed locker spaces cost only \$500 each. The locker experiment has been so successful that 20% to 30% of the lockers are being used by drivers who previously used a car parking space. Indeed, there is a waiting list of several hundred for more lockers on this much smaller rail system and to satisfy proven demand they need another 1000.

Action Please Alan Brown

Over the last 12 years 15000 car parking spaces have been provided at Melbourne stations and over 40% of them are used by able-bodied motorists who come from within easy cycling distance. If a few thousand motorists cycled to the station instead of driving it would save many millions and free up car parking spaces for those who come more than three kilometres.

A US Environment Protection Agency study completed ten years ago showed that bike/rail commuting does reduce energy use but car commuting does not.

Alan Brown should learn from this and adopt the "Queensland system" and install 1000 free bicycles lockers within the next year. All the existing lockers (300) should be made freely available. Indeed 30% of them are not used because of the useless paperwork system. The Queensland paperwork system ensures that 95% of lockers are in use during the working week.



Wimmera-Mallee

The WMRSA (Wimmera-Mallee Rail Service Association) hails the return of the Overland running between Adelaide and Melbourne via Geelong. However, as WMRSA reports "many used to the previous timetable in the Wimmera are finding new departure and arrival times at their stations awkward, and the length of journey to and from Melbourne too long. For example, at Horsham, previous journey times to and from Melbourne were each 4hrs 30 min....now journey times are nearly 6hrs (to Melbourne) and 6hr 30 min (return)."

Good news from Ararat is that much of the station complex has been classified by the Historic

Buildings Council of Victoria and the station leased by the Rural City of Ararat. Also, with the Ballarat Rail Promotion Group and West Coast Railway, action is being taken to retain the Ballarat to Ararat line as a tourist railway and rejoin it to the Ararat station. In the long term this might enable Sprinters to run to Ararat.

It also seems likely that the Council of the Rural City of Horsham will retain the Horsham station as a community asset and stop for interstate passenger trains.

East Gippsland

"On the Rails", the newsletter of the Save Our Train Community Action

Group reported that the Sprinter service to Traralgon is now operating with an enthusiastic reception. Hope now is for its extension to Baimsdale!

Albury-Wodonga

Wodonga Save the Trains Group has been given the opportunity to contribute to the study on the future of rail transportation in the Border cities and their hinterland, in North Eastern Victoria and the Southern Riverina. The Newsletter of the group sets out their policy on the issue and stresses their belief that the retention of a rail station in Wodonga is a critical need.

News in Brief...

National Bus: Swings and roundabouts

Last issue we reported that the National Bus Company had improved services on some Eastern suburban routes.

Unfortunately, the press release advising of this failed to mention some downsides that have been pointed out by members.

The new services were achieved by reducing services in other areas, such as on Route 200 (Bulleen-City), which now runs every 15 minutes off-peak instead of every 10.

Calcutta Trams

Several newsletters ago we mentioned the appeal we had received from Calcutta for our support in their fight to save their tramways. The trams were in danger of being replaced by, (you've guessed it!), buses. A recent letter from Dr D Bhattacharyya, who has been leading the campaign, is that for the moment at least, the tramways have been reprieved.

RACV Public Transport Survey

The August edition of *Royalauto* contains a public transport survey

which it could be worthwhile for members to complete and return to *Royalauto*

Anyone for public transport?

"Public transport is the way to go" says the Australian Grand Prix Corporation in its latest discussion paper on traffic management for the proposed Albert Park Grand Prix. Interesting the way the public transport penny drops when large city events are being organised. We think it's the way to go all the time.

Letters

from Colin Jeffrey

Replying to Daryl Williams letter in the July PTUA news. With virtually all Australians having access in some form or other to car transport most people joining the PTUA also use cars.

Our road system is perfectly adequate for our transport needs with a few minor improvements here and there. The difference between heavy free flowing traffic and a traffic jam is less than 10% in traffic volume.

If an intersection is capable of handling 100 cars per cycle and 99 cars arrive per cycle we have free flowing traffic. If 101 cars arrive per cycle that additional one car adds to the queue with each cycle and we have a traffic jam. If we had a little more car pooling and a little more public transport use our roads could easily handle the traffic.

The problem is that we are operating on the smorgasboard principle with high fixed car costs (average 35 cents/km, RACV) and low running costs (average 14 cents/km, RACV). The government has put up public transport fares for full fare paying passengers (those most likely to own cars) so it often costs more to go by public transport. It is also not supplying the best possible service.

The only impediment to unnecessary car use is traffic congestion and parking fees in the city. Remove that impediment and car use will just build until traffic congestion again occurs.

The question is, are we getting value for money from billions spent on freeways which will increase the spare capacity (empty seats) when there are cheaper ways of achieving the same result by utilising the spare capacity on public transport and in

private cars? Until we have done our utmost to use this capacity any big roads project is a waste of money (and unfortunately a big vote catcher from a motoring public).

from Bruce Wadeson

Hooray! At last a balanced item – that of Daryl Williams.

I too, joined the PTUA because of my belief that a high-quality public transport system was essential – but have been so often disappointed that the attitude of the Association is so anti-rubber tyres; indeed that opposing every improvement in our road system seems to be its main aim. But, like Daryl Williams, I don't support a "freeway at any cost" approach either.

The most recent example of opposition to what many people desire is the teaming with the Koonung Mullum NIMBY's – and many of my friends group PTUA as "just another nit-group" because of this. Surely, rather than opposing, we should be urging improved rail service too – particularly the third track from Box Hill to Ringwood so that express trains from Ringwood can speed us to Melbourne.

So, please consider combining with RACV to get better transport facilities – both steel wheels and rubber tyres.

From Sir Rupert Hamer

In your July Newsletter you invited comment on the letter from Daryl Williams criticising the P.T.U.A. for its strident opposition to all new or upgraded freeways, and its apparent obsession that improvements to public transport provide the only valid answer to Melbourne's transportation problems.

In my opinion it is an excellent letter, which should cause the P.T.U.A. to pause and reflect on its policies, lest it lose all credibility and comply only too well with its own slogan "Wrong Way – Go Back".

Like all our supporters, I remain firmly committed to urging a better, faster, cheaper and much more frequent public transport service, but I have never subscribed to the patently absurd theory that it would obviate the need for a good road system as well. As Mr. Williams indicates, it is truly a question of balance, and the appropriate allocation of resources between the two.

A reading of the *Wrong Way – Go Back* document could easily lead to the conclusion that the P.T.U.A. believes in driving people back to public transport by intensifying congestion and delays on the road system. Like many other supporters, I would hope and expect rather that we would accentuate the positive and advocate measures which would attract custom to public transport because of its speed, cheapness and accessibility.

Mindless opposition to all improvements to the road system will get us nowhere. We have to recognise certain relevant factors (which do not seem to be canvassed effectively in the Anti-City Link document) namely:–

1. Melbourne, like all world cities, is a city of cars and roads. For many people, freeways are a highly desirable form of roadway, for several reasons:

- (a) they are safer
- (b) they take road traffic off suburban streets
- (c) they are less polluting than main city streets

Letters cont'd

- (d) they are faster at most times
2. A high proportion of road traffic consists of trucks which cannot credibly be treated as replaceable by suburban public transport.
 3. Many Melbourne homes in the suburbs are not within reach of any fixed rail transport. Buses of course are extensive users of freeways.
 4. P.T.U.A. seems to be concentrating principally on commuters to the C.B.D. There are many other travellers to be considered.

With respect to the City Link project, some of the proposed new freeways will in truth by-pass the C.B.D., which I happen to think would be a distinct advantage all round.

This, then, is a plea for more balance in our philosophies. As Mr. Williams says, "better roads and better public transport are not mutually exclusive".

The PTUA values the patronage, help and active interest that Sir Rupert Hamer displayed in our work over many years and we welcome his entry into the debate on the merits of Wrong Way Go Back.

Heretofore, Sir Rupert has not only fully endorsed our publications but has applied all the vigour of his mind in promoting them. His speech at the launch of Greening Melbourne with Public Transport was memorable for those fortunate enough to hear it.

A while ago Sir Rupert and I had an amicable disagreement over the merits of closing country rail lines. I think that recent statistics have shown that I was right over that debate and I hope I am not displaying an Irish stubbornness in suggesting that we will be proved right in the arguments we propose as the

only course that has to be followed so that Melbourne can retain its reputation as "the world's most liveable city".

Patrick O'Connor

(Please refer to page 3 for PTUA president's reply to the above letters from Bruce Wadeson and Sir Rupert Hamer.)

from Phillip Morey

Daryl Williams states the obvious in saying roads are a "fact of life". However, trucks and cars also continue to diminish the quality of urban life to such an extent that catering for more and more vehicles on the roads will produce such massive amounts of noise and air pollution, road trauma, and frustrating congestion that Melbourne is being pushed toward an urban nightmare.

It appears our transport planners are aiming for "world's best practice" in obliterating more of the city in pursuit of solving traffic congestion. Los Angeles is the benchmark, with two thirds of its urban space devoted to the motor vehicle.

Daryl is also correct in saying that there is an "obvious inter-relationship between public transport and road issues". Where public transport and roads are in competition, as in Melbourne, expanding road capacity actually works against mobility for everyone. Bigger roads attract additional traffic and over a couple of years traffic jams will worsen at key points. Meantime, unfortunately, this initial attractiveness of wider and longer roads puts public transport into a deeper decline. A notable disastrous example was the link from the South Eastern Arterial to the Mulgrave Freeway. Within weeks

of its opening, 20% of passengers shifted their journeys from the Glen Waverley railway line to the new road. The prospects for successful public transport system will recede even further if the current round of freeway plans are completed. Conversely, improved public transport can make life easier for all travellers.

As presented, a "balanced" transport approach appears to mean more and more emphasis on roads the justification for which is better freight movement. In reality the huge extra tollway capacity is aimed fairly and squarely at attracting CBD commuters for which the existing rail network, with an improved service, is ideally suited. Only \$500 million would complete a Doncaster corridor rail line, a link to Tullamarine Airport via Broadmeadows, plus some short tram and electrified rail projects. Compare this with the Government's proposal for over \$6 billion worth of freeway building in and around Melbourne – an amount dwarfing anything proposed for other Australian cities or anywhere in the western world.

Surely a government looking for good value for dollars spent would want to assess what our extensive rail-based public transport system can offer in the way of extra environmentally friendly mobility before spending huge amounts on yesterday's transport system.

Currently only 8% of all trips in Melbourne are made by public transport. My understanding of "balance" is 50/50. Why not meet this halfway and go for 25% of all trips? It happens in our Canadian twin city, Toronto. It can happen here.

PTUA News

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**Copy deadline for the December
edition of the newsletter is
13 November 1995.**

Newsletter committee: Tim Hoffman, Tony Fuery, Neva Finch, Ayala Deasey.

Our thanks to the dedicated mailout team.

Tullamarine Freeway Corridor Residents' Group

Public meeting Wednesday 11 October 1995 7.30pm

Brunswick Town Hall

Speakers : Kenneth Davidson , "The Age"

Rowena Krivanek, Monash University.