

# News

Newsletter of the  
Public Transport Users Association

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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 Giradi

Alan Hardie

Tim Hoffmann

Phil Morey

Gerry Warren

## Information please!

PTUA office volunteers are eagerly awaiting the publication of the 1996 Melbourne Telephone Directory. During 1995 the PTC advertisement was listed in the directory on the wrong page with the result that the only listing under public transport is ours. This has resulted in daily calls seeking Met and V/Line information and all attempts to have the matter rectified by PTC or Telstra have been unsuccessful. We have even been considering (reasonably seriously!) another name change.

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## Willis fails to stop City Link

The PTUA was unimpressed by the (now) former Treasurer, Mr Ralph Willis', statement that he could have stopped the tax concession on the infrastructure bonds for the City Link project but failed to do so.

Either acting to facilitate City Link through sheer incompetence or a devotion to freeways (or because of Federal/State political machinations) he chose not to use the powers that he had to alter the rules under which the DAA operated until after City Link had obtained the Federal tax concession of \$65 million.

## THE FASTEST TRACKS OUTSIDE THE GRAND PRIX CIRCUIT.

*During the Grand Prix keep yourself moving fast with public transport...a free light rail tram, The Grand Prix Express, will take you directly to the circuit... at 2.5 minute intervals on Thursday and Friday and even quicker on Saturday and Sunday.*

Transurban Australian Grand Prix Advertisement.

Although we rejoice at this extensive use of public transport for the event, what is not stated is that only ticket holders for the race track may use the service. Normal passengers on the No. 12 and No. 96 routes will be forced to use the alternative – buses on altered routes.

## **“20 years” celebration – Are you on board?**

The PTUA is planning a "20 years" party /dinner  
for members and supporters.

If you would like to be part of these once-in-a-lifetime celebrations  
please let us know by calling the office on 9650 7898

# 20 years on – still running strong

**AS WE PLAN** our strategies for 1996, it is useful to reflect on the achievements of the past 20 years.

At 5.45pm on 13 April 1976, the first meeting of the Train Travellers Association, as we were then called, took place. Within a short space of time the association became a strong lobbying force with a large membership.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s the future of public transport was under threat. Country rail lines were being closed down right across Victoria. The operation of the suburban rail system was close to collapse. Industrial turmoil was rife. The Lonie Report was published recommending the closure of seven suburban rail lines and eight tram services

## **Public outraged by report**

In response to the Lonie Report, public meetings were organised by the Train Travellers Association in the city, suburbs and country, and these were packed. A meeting at the Assembly Hall in Melbourne was full, with hundreds of people standing in Collins Street unable to get in.

As a result of these meetings and strong lobbying by the Association and others, almost all suburban rail and tram services were saved, and a proposal by the then Minister for Transport, Mr Rob MacLellan, to close Sunday rail services was averted.

*It is worth recording that at the 1982 State election which saw a change of government, every Liberal member of Parliament whose seat was on a rail line marked for closure lost their seat.*

## **Grand Final stays at MCG**

Following the change of government, after which some promised extensions of service were implemented, the Association put great effort into trying to obtain improvement in service levels, with limited success.

One victory, which could be noted, was the campaign to retain the VFL Grand Final at the Melbourne Cricket Ground instead of the newly constructed but public transport-less VFL Waverley Park. We were also instrumental in having the clocks retained at Flinders Street station – at least one initiative which has not see-sawed back and forth during the ensuing years!

## **TTA becomes PTUA**

In 1984 our name was changed to the Public Transport Users Association as the result of the amalgamation of train, tram and bus services.

The year 1988 was one of particular achievement for the PTUA. The association successfully acted as broker to resolve a major crisis when the whole of the private bus industry threatened to secede from the then Metropolitan Transit Authority in response to a proposal to cut Met bus services provided by private contractors. The Met document, released to the media by the PTUA, listed 30 routes to be closed completely, 25 to lose all weekend services after noon Saturday, and 130 routes which would receive cuts to service frequency or hours of operation. A successful campaign prevented what would have been almost the complete decimation of the bus service.

## **Crisis conference called**

In recognition of our efforts an important “Transport in Crisis” Conference was financed. Speakers with expertise in all aspects of transport attended and this conference is often considered as a turning point in the transport debate in which the necessity of an extensive and efficient public transport system to the viability of any city was highlighted.

## **Keeping the printer busy**

Subsequent to this very successful initiative, we published our policy document, “Greening Melbourne with Public Transport”, a blueprint for the future of Melbourne as a city well served by its public transport system. This was followed by further publications, “Public Transport Financial Crisis”, and our current work “Wrong Way Go Back” - the public transport alternative to the destructive and expensive City Link project. The adoption of our proposal for all-night bus services, day and night XPT services to Sydney, the saving of the Upfield line, in which campaign we combined with other groups, and most important of all, a recognition that frequency of service is the key to attaining a better patronage, are our most notable recent achievements.

As we move towards the year 2000 – the name given to our affiliate world body “Transport 2000 International” – we thank all those who have given dedicated support to our work in the past, and we trust in their continued support for the future.

Patrick O'Connor

# A victory for the Frequency Campaign

As 1996 begins, the PTUA's recent focus on the need for improved public transport services is beginning to bear fruit, albeit in a modest way. New timetables have been introduced for Eastern suburbs rail lines incorporating increased service frequencies, especially in the off-peak period (but see opposite re the Sandringham line).

However a number of anomalies still exist. For instance residents beyond Ringwood on the Lilydale

and Belgrave lines now have a half hour service on Sundays but still must cope with a 40 minute Saturday service.

Also while a new tram terminus at Melbourne University has now been opened, this facility is extremely poorly designed for both passenger comfort and tram operations. Nevertheless it does represent some improvement with better tram services to the University.

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## To book or not to book

Our "poll" on compulsory booking of seats on country trains came out with the "non-bookers" just slightly ahead. Here are some of the comments:

**1** Turn up on the Day "More people would travel by country train if they could buy tickets without booking and do not mind if they stand all the way, for the sake of that convenience. Booking is often a slow and inconvenient business, often not even possible and deters many potential travellers."— Valerie Yule.

**2** Optional booking - "I would prefer optional booking as it was prior to the early '80s. Then if one wants to be certain of a good seat on the desired train, one

may reserve a seat in advance. However, it is frequently inconvenient to turn up at a booking office days before travel, in which case I would be willing to take my unbooked chance."— Alan Grigg, (who added a plea for an increased bus service to Kinglake. The present 7.0am to Melbourne and 6.0pm return means that he cannot, at very best, obtain more than five and a half working hours per day.)

**3** Booking system retained - "I have no difficulty with the booking system being dropped providing there is always a seat available. As this is an unlikely guarantee I would prefer to see the booking system retained."— Andrew Blair

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## THE TRANSPORT ACT 1983 –*The fine print*

For the information of members who are uncertain about their legal position in the present situation when it is often difficult to purchase a travel ticket, here is an extract from the Transport Act 1983 (Act No 9921/1983) -

\* Division 4 - Offences & Penalties

(2) A person may make a journey in a carriage, or be on land or premises for entry to which a ticket is required, without a ticket if -

(a) prior to commencing the journey or entering that land or those premises he takes all reasonable steps to purchase a ticket; and

(b) while making the journey or being on that land or those premises he has no reasonable opportunity to purchase a ticket; and

(c) on completion of the journey or on leaving that land or those premises he takes all reasonable steps to purchase a ticket.

(4) A person who makes a journey in a carriage, or is on land or premises for entry to which a ticket is required, and, not being entitled to make that journey or entry without a ticket, fails, upon request being made by a member of the police force or an authorised person, to produce a ticket that is valid for that journey or entry is guilty of an offence.

**Note:** "authorised person" means a person employed or authorised by the Public Transport Corporation who has duties in relation to the issue, inspection or collection of tickets or platform tickets.

# Sandringham – to loop or not to loop?

The new February timetable for the Sandringham line incorporates an increased frequency of service in peak period, but also involves the removal of all 'loop' services, so all trains run 'direct to Flinders St'.

In discussions with the Ministry of Transport, the PTUA has accepted that there is a case for simple patterns of service. People using public transport for the first time, or even people who travel at different times of the day, find it confusing to never know whether their train travels via the loop or not. Regular service patterns also make it easier to ensure that trains run reliably. There is a particular difficulty in the case of Sandringham trains, which do not have a separate entrance to the City Loop and must cross the paths of trains from other lines to enter the Loop.

It is certainly true that most of the best urban rail systems – e.g. the Paris Metro, the Toronto and Montreal subways – operate simple service patterns and require many passengers to transfer to complete their journeys. However, these systems usually feature frequent services at all times, along with convenient and safe interchanges.

Unfortunately, we cannot claim this for Melbourne. The PTUA pointed out that changing from loop to Flinders Street trains in Melbourne is inconvenient, owing to infrequent services (meaning long waits at Richmond), the unattractive facilities at Richmond station, and the 'musical chairs' game that goes on with Loop trains in the morning peak.

We welcome readers' comments on this issue.

## PTC priorities?

The daily commuter continues to lose out but no expense spared for "The Big Race."

Travellers on the No. 12 tram need have no fear of the power failing at the South Melbourne, Middle Park, West St. Kilda end. There is now enough power there to run the whole metropolitan system. And don't fear you will not find room to wait for the No 96 at Middle Park or Wright Street stops.

Both platforms have now been extended to

accommodate more commuters than they are ever likely to see. But don't look for an extension of the No 12 line beyond Fitzroy Street to meet other St Kilda services. The extension recently put in goes in the other direction and connects with the No. 96 headed for the city.

I'm sure readers could suggest a million other ways the PTC could spend its money (a reputed \$2 million) on infrastructure improvements.

### The 3rd edition of **Travel Times Australia**

The most comprehensive guide to travel throughout Australia by coach, train and ferry

- Published in a new format and with two new sections on the Great Trains of Australia and major City Centre maps.
- Contains everything independent travellers (and travel agents) need to navigate their way around Australia in this easy-to-use publication.
- Published twice a year in November and April by Traveltimes Publishing.



- Available in major newsagents for \$7.95 or by post for \$9.45 direct from 3 Goodwin Street, Glen Iris, Vic 3146.

**Further information from  
Malcolm Simister Tel: (03) 9889 3344.**

# TOETAG = The Outer Eastern Transport Action Group

Following on from a campaign launched by the PTUA last year, a new public transport group has been formed in Melbourne's outer eastern suburbs.

Covering the plains suburbs of Knox and the hills towns of the Dandenong Ranges, The Outer Eastern Transport Action Group - or "TOETAG" for short - hopes to put public transport issues right on the map.

Melbournes outer eastern suburbs have some of the worst bus services in Melbourne, with wandering routes, infrequent services and a 6.30 pm shutdown. They also happen to have three of Melbourne's most

marginal state electorates!

Over the next few months, TOETAG will undertake a wide range of activities, from stalls at shopping centres to safety inspections. A public transport strategic plan, or "Vision" will be developed to attempt to persuade local politicians and service providers of the need for an efficient, safe, affordable, integrated public transport system for the suburbs of Melbourne.

If you'd like to help with the activities of TOETAG, please call Anthony FitzGerald on 9754 3488 (AH) or the PTUA office.

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## PTUA Stalls for 1996

Our 1995 stalls programme was very successful. In the Boronia area, which was particularly targeted, many people found our information of great interest. The Outer-Eastern area now has its own Public Transport Action Group (see above) as a result of PTUA efforts last year.

Our next target area is the Tullamarine Corridor, emphasising the need for the Airport rail link off the Broadmeadows line and the need for massively upgrading bus services in the region.

Below is a list of stalls we are planning to hold in

this area. All stalls are on a Saturday between 9.30am and 3-5pm. If you are able to help on any of stalls, (and we suggest this is a very good way to become more familiar with the issues and more involved with the association), please ring the office to have your name added to our volunteer list.

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| 16 March | Gladstone Park Shopping Centre, Tullamarine. |
| 23 March | Sunbury Square Shopping Centre               |
| 6 April  | Airport West Shoppingtown                    |
| 20 April | Puckle St Moonee Ponds                       |
| 4 May    | Chapel St Prahran                            |

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## Letter

*from Greg Catterall (reprinted from KMFA Newsletter)*

I recently took up the suggestion "Go for a walk" in the KMFA leaflet inserted in the December PTUA newsletter. We started at the park in Lisbeth Ave and continued down the paths towards Ringwood. We continued on until hitting the visitors centre, then returned. Along the way we saw ducks in the creek and about two dozen beautiful parrots in a persons backyard just near the tennis courts. What hit me most of all, coming from North Fitzroy (where

I now live) and Essendon (where I grew up) is the density of the bush in the creek valley.

In Essendon people rave about how nice it is to walk along the Maribyrnong River near the Anglers Tavern, or go up to Brimbank Park, about the closest thing to bush we have. In North Fitzroy people enjoy the short and narrow stretches of the Merri Creek. But not one of these areas has the density of natural bush or the width of valley or the feeling of being away from it all that the Koonung Mullum Valley has. We were amazed it was to be destroyed. It is exactly the type of

area people search for to relax. I've spoken to many people about where they live, some say that they want to hear a bird sing. Some say they love living near their park as they can go for a walk and relax.

Your area has all this and more. It's the type of place that great efforts are being made to create along the Maribyrnong, Moonee Ponds Creek and the Merri Creek Valleys.

We then finished our trip by driving around the Ringwood Shopping centre and see the barrel drain and we were shocked by the contrast between it and the land across the road.



# News in Brief...

## British urged to leave the car at home

"Don't Choke Britain", says the British Minister for Transport when launching a campaign aimed at encouraging public awareness of the effects of congestion on the environment and vitality of cities; and drawing attention to the fact that many of the car journeys now made could be made at least as efficiently by public transport or cycling.

"This campaign to get more people to leave their cars at home and to use public transport gets bigger every year with more and more local authorities encouraging the casual car-user to get on a bus or a train" continued the Minister, Steven Norris.

## Dublin prefers rails to roads

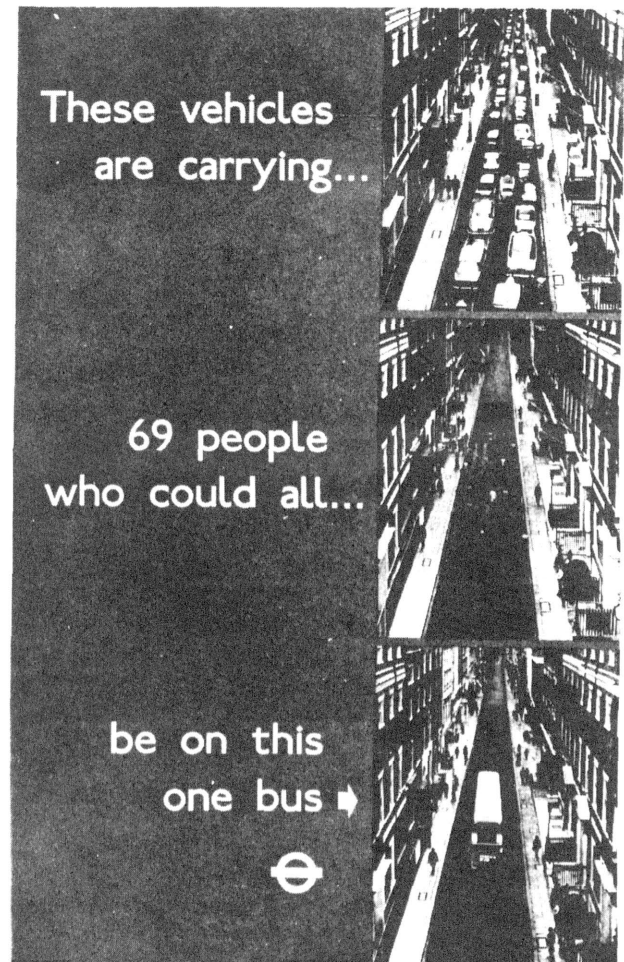
A new light rail system to Dublin Airport and extensions to the existing electric rail network are key aspects of the plan to get people out of their

cars and onto public transport in a city where bumper-to-bumper commuter traffic has become a way of life. Suburban train services will be upgraded, bus corridors introduced and new bicycle lanes opened with the planned total spending of \$1.2 billion.

## One way to save waste

This is a copy of a poster issued by the London Transport Executive. The use of private motor vehicles in large numbers is extremely wasteful of resources, especially metals and fuel.

If all the people in the picture travelled by bus, they would not only conserve resources; they would also reduce traffic congestion, noise and air pollution – and they would save money. Why don't they?



## Wrong Way Go Back – reprint still available!

The PTUA's policy paper **Wrong Way Go Back – the alternative to Melbourne's freeway explosion**, has received rave reviews from members, activists and commentators. The first print run of 500 copies sold out in only a couple of months, but a reprint has now been completed. You can order your copy by phoning the PTUA office (we will send an invoice), or by sending a cheque for \$5.00, together with your name and address, to:

**Wrong Way Go Back**

**PTUA, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, 3000.**

# **PTUA News**

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