

News

Newsletter of the
Public Transport Users Association

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Scoresby Freeway shelved Battle for public transport begins in earnest

Labor's new transport minister Peter Batchelor has confirmed that the new government does not intend to proceed with the \$816 million Scoresby Freeway. This wonderful news caps off a very eventful few weeks for our major campaign (see also separate report from Tim Hoffmann on page 4).

The change of government caught us by surprise; so also did the findings of the inquiry panel appointed by former planning minister Robert Maclellan.

The PTUA forced the release of this report through an application to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, but it proved a disappointment. As we had been advised by informed sources, the panel did find that a package of alternatives based around public

transport could well have proven the best solution of the area's transport problems. However, the panel said its terms of reference did not permit it to examine such an option!

Fortunately the report has been superseded by the Labor party's commitment to follow due process for any major infrastructure proposal during its term of office. The new government has also indicated that the Scoresby Freeway is not on its agenda; and its transport policy for the State election (see the insert to September's newsletter) commits Labor to developing a public transport plan for the outer east that includes substantially improved services, a tram extension to Knox, and a rail extension to Rowville.

We cannot afford to rest on our laurels, however. The new government will come under tremendous pressure from the road lobby to reverse its decision. We need your help to counter this pres-

sure. Please write to your local MP (especially if you live in the corridor), or Premier Steve Bracks, or Transport Minister Peter Batchelor, to congratulate the government on its decision. Please also write to your local newspapers.

Public Meeting

11 November 7:30pm

The next part of the campaign is a public meeting at the Knox Municipal Offices (see page 3). We hope as many people as possible will attend to show that the community is overwhelming support for public transport improvements in the outer eastern suburbs. Please let your friends and relatives know. Feel free to copy the flyer or ring the PTUA office for more copies. The meeting has been organised together with the Knox City Council and the Knox Environment Society.

Paul Mees

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Keeping in touch...

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Committee Meetings

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World Wide Web

Our home page is on Vicnet at
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John McPherson — Vice President
Vaughan Williams — Secretary
Wendy Everingham — Treasurer

Les Chandra	Anthony Morton
James Forsyth	Demitri Pimenides
Tim Hoffman	Miriam Powell
Tim Mattingsbrooke	David Robertson
Anna Morton	

City Link Nightmares

The first part of City Link opened in August free of charge for a one-week introductory period. This week stretched into two, and nearly three months later, still no tolls apply. Transurban has been saying that tolls will apply "soon" for several weeks but still seems unable to get its computers working properly.

The traffic flow results of City Link have been mixed. The Flemington Rd exit is still congested in peak hour, and the Tullamarine/Calder junction near

Essendon Airport has become worse. Soon, people will be paying for the same congestion they used to get for free.

As well, the Burnley Tunnel has disrupted the water table in the area and caused water from the Yarra and the Botanical Gardens to leak into the tunnel, cracking its structure. Transurban says the tunnels will be open in January - but don't hold your breath. According to The Age, Transurban and Transfield-Obayashi are now suing each other over

the tunnel debacle.

On top of this administrative and engineering debacle is the Peter Allan case which grinds on after another hearing before the full Federal Court. So far there has been no decision on Transurban's appeal against Justice Merkel's ruling in favour of Peter. Regardless of the outcome the case seems likely to proceed to the High Court. Stay tuned for further updates.

Tony Morton

Five Rules for Successful Light Rail Systems

Extracts from an article in 'Tramways and Urban Transit', October 1999 (www.lрта.org) by Horst Schaffer, Deputy General Manager of the Zurich Transport Company. Since 1987 he has been a member of the UITP International Light Rail Commission.

While Zurich is probably the richest city in the world per capita, it also has the highest per capita use of public transport in the western world.

'One of the primary themes of the coming decades (in the western world) will be the management of man's con-

stantly increasing requirement for individual mobility.'

'In the major cities the resources for additional traffic space have been long since exhausted and moreover, cities which comprise only roads and multi-story car parks offer hardly any space for an attractive life.'

'But it would be an error to imagine that... (electronic traffic management and production of small city cars)...alone could permit unlimited growth in mobility requirements.'

'If the mobility problems are to be enduringly solved, then.....a suitable means of transport with the lowest envi-

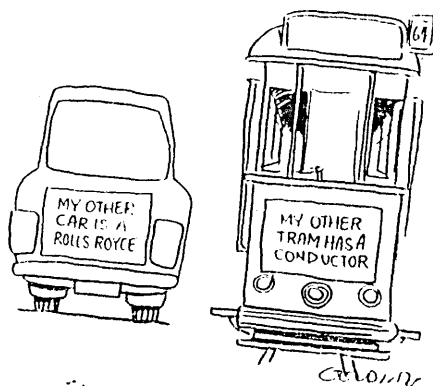
ronment load should be selected for each transport assignment.'

'A highly integrated public transport system is an absolute necessity for combined mobility. In future, opportunities for public transport are better than ever before, providing it seizes this promptly and in a customer-oriented manner.'

Conclusion - 'Behaviour in selecting the suitable mobility must change, existing road space has to be relocated from private vehicles towards public transport and alternatives and incentives to use public rather than private transport have to be provided!'

State Election Upset

What does it mean for PT?



courtesy of The Melbourne Times

The knife edge result in the Victorian State Election came as a surprise to everybody, with the Kennett Government's massive majority slashed to nothing.

For the first time in years, independent MPs hold the balance of power and the enormous leverage this gives them over the major parties.

The revised ALP transport policy, released just 8 days before the election, contains some concrete commitments to several worthwhile public transport improvements including the Knox City Tram and the

extension of electrified rail north to Roxburgh Park and Craigieburn.

It is to be hoped that regardless of who has formed government, the major parties will now recognise the vital importance of public transport in many key electorates and modify their policies accordingly.

The return of train services to Mildura, Bairnsdale, Leongatha and possibly Ararat may well be on the cards as well as an upgrade of the Latrobe Valley commuter services. Frequency improvements and more express running of metropolitan trains are also badly needed.

Rumour File

In the dying days of the state election, local papers in the critical seat of Yan Yean reported promises of a new station at Roxburgh Park attributed to Liberal candidate Heather Tivendale. However, there is no mention of this in Liberal transport policy and Ms Tivendale was evasive when queried on the matter.

More concerning was a rumour circulated at about the same time that a re-elected Liberal government would truncate the Hurstbridge line at Eltham. Ms Tivendale denied this, but it appears from information received by the PTUA that the rumour was true - a viability study for the line beyond Eltham was on the agenda. If Heather Tivendale had told the truth about the rail line she would have lost the election.

How ironic then that she lost it anyway. It appears from the results in the Diamond Creek and Hurstbridge areas that the reported plans to shorten the line - and Labor's promise to electrify the line to Craigieburn - were crucial in the re-election of the sitting Labor MP, Andre Haermeyer

Vaughan Williams

A SEACHANGE for 'Scoresby'

Trams, rail and a better bus service for the Outer East!

With the election of the Labor government the community have a fantastic opportunity to lobby for decent transport in the outer eastern suburbs. The government has promised improved bus services, a tram to Knox and a rail extension to Rowville. A public meeting has been called for all residents along the 'Scoresby' corridor to discuss environ-

mental friendly transport for the region.

At the meeting the actor **Alan Cassell** will speak (famous for his role in *Seachange*). Melbourne's well loved tram conductors will also be present in full uniform, heralding the arrival of a new tram services and better public transport. Transport Minister Peter Batchelor has also been invited.

**When: Thursday 11 November
7.30pm (Remembrance Day)**

**Where: Knox Function Rooms
Knox Council Offices
511 Burwood Highway
Wantirna South (near Knox City Shopping Centre)**

For further information ring the Public Transport Users Association on 9650 7898

Independents Day

Country Trains back on the rails?

All three independent MPs, Russell Savage, Susan Davies and Craig Ingram, are supportive of public transport. Interestingly, all three were elected in rural constituencies where rail lines were closed under the Kennett government.

Although not part of the Independents Charter (which focussed more on government process and accountability than policy issues), the demise of country trains appears set for revisiting. Russell Savage and Susan Davies committed to the return of trains to Mildura and Leongatha respectively, and new

MP Craig Ingram is believed to be supportive of restoring trains to Bairnsdale.

Other independent candidates, although not elected, tended to poll well in rural areas.

Metropolitan independent candidates who supported public transport also polled well, although there were none of the upsets that prevailed in rural areas. I prefer a tram conductor's Roberto D'Andrea polled 4% in Monash Province, rising to 8% (more than the Democrats) in the St Kilda area. Former mayor of Dandenong Ros Blades also polled 4% in Eumemmering Province.

Vaughan Williams

Double Charging Continues

For many years people living on the urban fringe in the west and north of Melbourne have faced the irritation of double charging on V-line services.

Passengers who hold a metropolitan ticket are entitled to travel on v-line services to places like Melton, Sunbury and Craigieburn. Travel beyond these points requires purchase of a V-line ticket, the price of which is based on distance.

It would seem logical therefore that passengers from, for example, Gisborne, would only need to purchase a V-line ticket to Sunbury if they already held a metropolitan ticket. The same reasoning applies from Bacchus Marsh & Ballarat to Melton, Geelong to Werribee, and Seymour to Craigieburn.

However, V-line requires passengers to purchase a single V-line ticket to the destination (for most people, Spencer St), regardless of any metropolitan ticket they already hold. This means that passengers effectively pay the fare from Sunbury, Melton, Werribee or Craigieburn to the city twice.

The loss of the electorates of Seymour, Gisborne, Geelong, and the two Ballarat seats at the recent state election highlights the contempt with which people in these areas are treated on this and many other issues.

A partial solution might be to apply Zone 3 to the west and north of Melbourne as well as the south and east. Stony Point is some 65km from Melbourne, a distance comparable to Geelong and compared with 50km for Bacchus Marsh & Gisborne and 70km for Broadford. Increasing urbanisation in these areas means that it is simply not fair to apply V-line fares.

The PTUA believes, however, that passengers should only be required to pay for the portion of the trip for which they do not already hold a ticket. In the longer term, a zone system could be introduced throughout the state. This would have the added benefit of allowing people to use feeder buses in regional centres as well as small towns not served by rail on the same ticket as the train. This will be a growing problem if V-line buses become separated from the relatively integrated V-line network.

Vaughan Williams

Scoresby Campaign

Worker's Report

BATTLE FOR FRANKSTON EAST

Station safety fears

We spoke to about 40 people while we were there and many said they did not feel safe at the station.

KANANOOK Station users had legitimate safety fears and are frustrated it's ticket machine is constantly broken, the Public



The train, the train: David Robertson and Tim Hoffmann of the Public Transport Users' Association canvassed rail users at Kananook Station to highlight the need for better public transport in Frankston East campaign. Picture: PAUL WOODLAND

from *The Frankston Standard*

I've been working for the PTUA for the past three months on the Scoresby Campaign. This has been made possible through a grant from the Reichstein Foundation.

Over the past few months I have been involved in organised stalls in Knox, Clayton, Eltham, Rowville, Bundoora and, during the recent by election, out in Frankston. Through the stalls the PTUA has tried to highlight public transport as an important issue and to listen to the concerns and issues that local residents have.

We were able to get some press coverage during the Frankston East campaign. We highlighted the need to im-

prove local bus services and station safety. Many residents spoke about their concerns about safety on trains and stations and the disastrous state of the ticketing system. Obviously both problems could be addressed with the employment of staff on the system.

A number of members and supporters have helped us out in the campaign and their energy and labour is greatly appreciated. In particular Wendy Everingham and David Robertson have been of great assistance.

If you live out in the corridor and wish to help with the our ongoing campaign please ring the office and let us know.

Tim Hoffmann

Tram and Bus Priority

As traffic over much of metropolitan Melbourne continues to get heavier and heavier on the main road system, street based public transport inevitably gets caught in the congestion. In cities where public transport is regarded as important there are strategies and technical fixes that can at least alleviate the problems of late and unpredictable running that result in passenger frustration. Psychological studies have shown that passengers are very intolerant of waiting time delays in the same way car drivers become furious when held up.

In the past not much more than lip service has been paid to the problems of tram and bus delay in Melbourne even though some impressive sounding systems have been put in place such as the tracking system (now split for the two tram companies) that follows all trams across the system yet seems to do very little for reliability and on-time running.

Good old Vicroads who surely have good P.R. if nothing else and tout their 'world class' traffic light control system at every opportunity have been remarkably resistant to pt priority, choosing to regard a tram or bus as just another vehicle regardless that one tram or bus can keep 40 cars at home in the garage.

A senior National Bus Company manager tells the story of a year long battle with Vicroads to achieve improved bus priority at one intersection!

Of course P.T priority comes in many grades and Vicroads engineers will look you in the eye and say 'yes, of course' the tram has priority when all they mean is a detector loop allocates a tram phase once each cycle of the traffic lights when a tram is present and waiting at the intersection.

This can mean a tram with 80 passengers waits 2 minutes to cross an arterial like Alexandra Parade which carries peak commuters one to a car. The efficiency of public transport is being com-

pletely negated to cater for the indulgence of long distance peak commuting to the city by car.

At the other end of the priority scale is the Zurich solution (and Melbourne has much of the same signal control equipment) where the trams and buses run like an above ground metro and the pt vehicles manage the traffic signal system to give smooth unobstructed travel.

The traffic signals actually change to 'green' for the pt vehicle when the driver signals departure from the stop and as vehicles approach an intersection non-stop, the lights adjust the cycle to a 'green' for the pt vehicle.

The result is that pt gets the best priority and cars are allocated the available cycle time after pt is catered for. In my view this would be appropriate for the inner parts of Melbourne where traffic is dense in the peaks and so are pt services. Surely the message to send to car based commuters must be: 'You will get a better ride on the tram or bus'.

Special right turn signal phases are used at some traffic lights to clear cars ahead of trams but often this function operates in an almost random manner with no control by the tram driver. Special lanes can allow buses to by-pass congestion at some road intersections and 'intelligent' signals can hold the phase on 'green' for longer to allow the bus or tram to clear through an intersection.

The so-called 'Fairway' clearway system has not been enforced during the past 7 years of former state government administration.

A last point, a small sign on the rear of buses asks that cars please give priority as the bus leaves the stop, when in fact a traffic regulation actually requires cars to give way, yet few bus drivers are prepared to assert their priority and even the bus companies do not appreciate this issue.

John McPherson

Tram Stops Upgraded why not buses?

Anyone who travels to the CBD regularly will have noticed some improvements to "safety zone" tram stops over the last few months, especially at the busy Swanston/Flinders intersection. The safety zone itself has been widened (incidentally, without the loss of any traffic lanes), basic weather shelter added, and a slightly raised platform constructed to facilitate boarding.

While the PTUA naturally applauds the improvements, why are these changes only being made sporadically, instead of everywhere? It is interesting to note that safety zones do not appear to have been widened where this would result in loss of a traffic lane. Once again, motorists first, tram travellers second.

And again, why are improvements like this not made at bus stops? PTUA member Jan Lacey has campaigned for some time on the need to display timetables at all bus stops. Supposedly, this is required under the passenger's charter. However, when Jan contacted former Minister Robin Cooper, she was told that the meant only "major" bus stops and that it was not possible to install timetables at all bus stops. This is strange given that prior to the red-and-yellow peril of National Bus there was a bus timetable at every stop. These have been progressively removed by National. Also, timetables are provided at all tram stops. Trams run much more frequently than buses and so, if anything, there is less need for a timetable.

All tram and bus stops should have adequate shelter, space and information for passengers. A timetable (where buses run at less than five minute intervals) is essential to allow people to determine when the next bus is expected and whether they have time to get a coffee or (if a very long wait is expected) to consider alternative transport. A route map is also a basic essential - even regular users cannot be expected to memorise all tram and bus routes in Melbourne, not to mention occasional users and visitors.

Vaughan Williams

Letters to the PTUA

Fare Increases

In a Herald-Sun article about vandalism to ticket machines, transport minister Robin Cooper was no doubt eager to announce that fare revenue had increased on the previous year. In the last paragraph, however, it states that the increase was \$4.1 million or 1.6%, "\$1.8 million coming from increased patronage and the rest due to a 3% fare increase on January 1."

Correct me if I'm wrong, but if fares increased by 3% while revenue increased by only 1.6%, how can that be interpreted as anything other than a fall in patronage?

Michael Graves

Editor: The only other possible explanations for revenue not increasing in proportion to fare increases (apart from, as you say, a fall in patronage), are an increase in fare evasion (reported by the Auditor General with the introduction of Metcard), or a change in the demographics of passengers (fewer full fare paying passengers and more concession passengers). The latter seems unlikely but the former could explain the discrepancy.

Off Peak Fares

Last Sunday I took the train to the city. The machine did not validate the off peak ticket I purchased. Of course there were no staff on the station to ask for assistance so I decided to wait until I was at Flinders St.

There I was told that the ticket is not valid because weekends are not considered off peak. Why are weekends not considered off-peak? What time could be more off-peak than weekends? (And please don't tell me it has always been like that, as the person on the Hillside Trains complaint line told me). Train frequency on weekends has been improved, presumably to attract more passengers, but peak hour fares still apply.

If people have to pay full price when travelling on weekends they will think twice before using public transport instead of their own car. I certainly will! I wonder whether Hillside Trains will change this odd condition

Brigitte Wustemann

Editor: We agree that off-peak fares should apply on weekends as well as during the day as they do in places as diverse as Sydney and Vancouver. They could also be applied to trains travelling in the counter-peak direction. After half an hour on hold to Met Information I was told that the old off peak fares have been replaced with the new ones complained of in the letter below. Although the fares are lower, the ability to transfer to a tram or bus in the city has been lost. Incidentally, mine was the first enquiry they had received!

New Off Peak Tickets a Bad Deal

Off Peak train travellers hoping to benefit from the new discount day tickets are likely to be disappointed when they make further enquiries. This week I contacted Caulfield Station to enquire further about these tickets. The prices seemed reasonable - \$3.30 for Zone 1, \$4.90 for Zone 1 & 2. However, the limited availability of these tickets and the conditions attached to them make them useless for most people.

These tickets can only be obtained from Premium Stations. You cannot get them from normal Metcard outlets or vending machines. The bulk of travellers whose local station is not Premium must either pay a fare to travel to a premium station to buy an off peak ticket or risk fines for fare evasion enroute to buy the ticket. When you add the costs of the two tickets required, not to mention the inconvenience of changing trains, the off peak tickets become unattractive.

If that wasn't enough to deter you from using these tickets, it gets worse! Though it is possible to pre-purchase the tickets, you must specify the day of use at the time of purchase rather than simply validating them at the time of use as with pre-paid Metcards. People who don't actually use the ticket on the day specified lose their money as there are no refunds.

The third failing of these off peak tickets is that they are single-modal, that is, do not allow transfers to trams or buses. This reduced their appeal dramatically. The inflexibility and limited availability of these tickets makes them useless for most off peak

travel - the market they are supposed to serve. If off peak tickets are to be successful they must be useable on any day the passenger chooses, allow transfers to buses and trams, and be available from ticket machines and all metcard outlets. Until these changes are made, the new tickets will be unpopular and do little to boost patronage and contribute to a frequent, well used and economical system.

Peter Parker

Editor: We agree. Another problem is that concession off peak fares are only marginally cheaper than regular concession fares. An off-peak concession fare is approximately 60% of full off peak fares. The erosion of the multi-modal system - just what we predicted would follow from privatisation - does not auger well for the future of public transport which must capture people who need to catch a bus to the station, for whom these tickets are completely unavailable. Having said that, we support any attempt to boost patronage through off peak discounts. It's a pity this one was badly planned.

Public Transport Outside Melbourne

I am a resident of Geelong and travel to Melbourne Uni every day. Therefore I have an interest not only in Melbourne public transport but in V/line as well as the Geelong public transport system (an appalling bus network).

Perhaps you do purport to represent the whole of Victoria but I see statements on your website such as "We undertake research into public transport which will improve services and make Melbourne a better city in which to live." Not to mention the message received by not sending a representative to the Geelong transport workshop, for example.

If you don't wish to represent not-Melbourne, however, in the face of many country rail closures a large number of commuters to Melbourne from other cities as well as public transport users in regional centres themselves I would suggest this is an area in which you could get more members.

Tim Petersen

Brisbane to Bundaberg by 'Tilt Train'

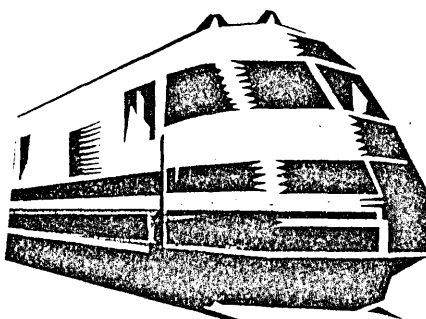
A Victorian Perspective

08 NOV 1999

OF VICTORIA

Profitable Queensland Rail recently spent \$60 million on two high tech, 6 car electric 160km/hr tilt trains for the Brisbane to Rockhampton route and a further \$40 million on signalling and straightening some curves of this very sinuous 650km rail line. The result is an average speed of around 90km/hr in an admittedly very comfortable train with marvellous catering. However about 2 hours of the time savings come from faster speeds on the straight track and only about 30 minutes savings from faster speeds around the many curves. The steam or diesel hauled Melbourne-Albury express trains have averaged this same speed for many decades now.

My trip from Brisbane to Bundaberg left me thinking how lucky we are in Victoria where most main rail lines are fairly straight and the cost of higher speeds is much smaller. Super Sprinter



railcars will soon be able to slash the travel time to Albury/Wodonga to 2.5hrs by cruising at 160km/hr. The extra cost of 'tilt' for faster curving speeds which can add 15-20% to the cost of a train will not be necessary here.

Super Sprinter railcars will be flexible and able to run singly or coupled to-

gether. A similar expenditure that provides one 6 car train each way per day to Rockhampton and two between Bundaberg and Brisbane will enable very fast **hourly** trains to Albury/Wodonga (310kms) all day and the same up the Goulburn Valley to Shepparton and Cobram, a fast **hourly** inter urban stopping train to Seymour plus extra regional connecting bus services and also benefit Victorian freight train services with the improved smoother track.

The new electric Qld. tilt trains may be high tech, but we can get far better value for money here in Victoria with fast, high frequency services using Super Sprinter diesel railcars on all our main lines out of Melbourne to country centres like Bairnsdale, Leongatha, Warrnambool, Dimboola, Mildura, Swan Hill, Echuca, Shepparton and Albury/Wodonga!

John McPherson.

Letters cont'd

Editor: It is unfortunate that the PTUA lacks the resources to run extensive campaigns throughout country Victoria. However, we have both recently and in the past supported local groups campaigning for the restoration of trains to Mildura and Bairnsdale and we have met with and lobbied rural and regional MPs such as Russell Savage and Susan Davies. We have attempted to establish sub-

branches in regional centres such as Geelong and Ballarat but these groups do not seem to attract enough attention to be viable. Any members interested in establishing such a group could contact the office.

With regard to the Geelong transport workshop we generally do not participate in these workshops regardless of whether they are in Melbourne or elsewhere. This is because of our

severely limited human resources. The Committee does not regard it as a productive use of volunteer labor to send people to these workshops when little if anything eventuates from them.

The Committee would be pleased to hear from any other members in regional Victoria whether they agree with Tim's concerns and what they feel could be done to improve the PTUA's work in regional Victoria.

Copy Deadline for the next PTUA News is 1 February 2000

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❄ ❄ ❄ **Season's Greetings to All Our Members** ❄ ❄ ❄

Membership Drive

As a way of becoming more involved with the PTUA, we are actively seeking members to help us distribute membership forms. Maybe you know someone with a stall who would like to display some leaflets, alternatively you may like to monitor your local library's supply of forms or maybe even leave some at your local railway station. Anyone wanting to help, please give me a call at the office (9650 7898) and I can send you some leaflets in the mail.

Wendy Everingham

Changed your address?

Make sure your PTUA News follows you when you move!

Cut out or photocopy this form, fill in and return to us at
PTUA, Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000.

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