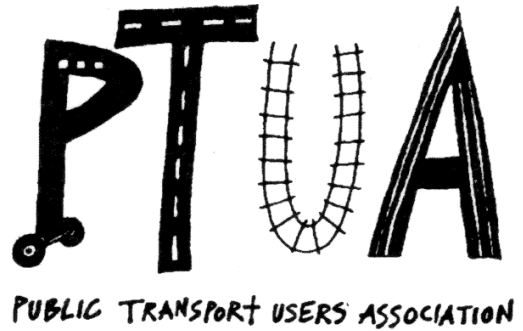


Public Transport Users Association Inc.  
Org No. A-6256L

9 December 2015

Mr Carl Cowie  
Chief Executive Officer  
Mornington Peninsula Shire  
Private Bag 1000  
Rosebud  
VIC 3939  
DX 30059



Attention: Ms Rita Kontos  
Sustainable Transport Project Coordinator  
Email: [rita.kontos@mornpen.vic.gov.au](mailto:rita.kontos@mornpen.vic.gov.au)

Dear Mr Cowie

**PTUA SUBMISSION ON MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY**

As the recognised consumer organisation representing passengers of all forms of public transport in Victoria The Public Transport Users Association welcomes the opportunity to provide this response to the proposed Sustainable Transport Strategy 2015 - 2020.

We would be pleased to discuss the detail of the submission included at Attachment A at the convenience of Councillors and Officers of the Shire.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Morton', written in a cursive style.

**Tony Morton**  
President  
Att.

## **ATTACHMENT A**

### **PTUA SUBMISSION ON MORNINGTON PENINSULA SHIRE SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY**

It is well recognised that the Mornington Peninsula has some of the poorest public transport services in the Melbourne metropolitan area. This, more than anything else, compromises the provision of sustainable transport on the Peninsula. Services are infrequent, with poor service span, inadequate weekend services, and routes are indirect for some services. Services of this character do not adequately cater for journey's to work as the draft strategy document notes, nor for the generality of trips made for other social, educational or economic purposes.

The consequence of the resultant high car dependency by Peninsula residents and the large seasonal visitor populations has been steady increases in road congestion and a decline in residential amenity. Unfortunately, the periodic default response has been to build more roads in the vain quest to "solve" congestion rather than to improve the capability of public transport services and active transport forms.

#### **Transport planning and public transport on the Peninsula**

This scenario played out most recently with the construction of the Peninsula Link freeway which contributes very significantly to making the Peninsula more car dependent. That further extension of the freeway is now being contemplated to take pressure off sections of Point Nepean Road without regard for the more beneficial alternatives of increased public transport services is especially regrettable and should be challenged.

The Peninsula Link freeway was developed without any consideration of how the \$800 million finally allocated to the project may have been most effectively deployed to provide for mobility to and from and within the Mornington Peninsula. In particular, there was no analysis during the planning stage to address the scope and necessity for modal shift to public transport, cycling and walking. To recover a sustainable transport future for the Mornington Peninsula this failing should not be repeated.

However, VicRoads has in its 2013 study of road usage of Point Nepean Road not given any consideration to mode shift to alleviate the demand for additional road capacity. Rather, VicRoads has asserted the opposite: that a projected increase in road capacity would improve running times for the (currently few) available bus services in the corridor.

This is what may be characterised as the "predict and provide" model of provision of road capacity, which has been de rigueur for decades in Victoria but is no longer considered plausible in jurisdictions which are effective in establishing a more appropriate mode share for sustainable transport. In the interests of its population and the preservation of its environment the Mornington Peninsula Shire needs to join in robustly contesting this view.

## **Advocating for public transport in the mainstream**

There is almost certainly a wrong public perception of the function of public transport shared by many on the Mornington Peninsula, and indeed in the wider Melbourne metropolitan area. It is too often seen as largely a **residual** service for the young who have not qualified to drive, the old and unwell that are unfit to drive and the indigent who are unable to afford to drive. The apathy reflected in public responses on what might be done to improve transport which came through in the survey conducted on behalf of the Council is reflective of the wrong and fatalistic view that public transport is not a primary concern that has relevance for everyone.

Local government has sometimes held too modest a view of its potential to influence State government expenditure priorities in transport in local areas. Positive change has often been achieved where local government has a clear view of its priorities and where these priorities have the active campaigning support of the local community. It needs to be made clear to the Victorian government that public transport needs to play a central economic, social and environmental role and is relevant to everyone. Such mainstreaming needs to be at the centre of combined advocacy and campaigning activity for the provision of effective public transport services in Mornington Peninsula Shire.

## **Post-secondary student travel**

As a consequence of the few post-secondary educational opportunities on the Mornington Peninsula most post-secondary students have to travel to institutions remote from the Peninsula. There is a quite reasonable concern that the funding for the *PenBus* which provides a dedicated service for students on the Port Phillip Bay side of the Peninsula as far south as Rosebud to three educational institutions will be lost. The service currently provides an average 1070 weekly trips, an average passenger load of about 18 for each service.

*PenBus* provides a speedy service for those who can avail themselves of it (one hour and twenty five minutes one way from Rosebud to the Monash University campus at Clayton) versus about two hours and 30 minutes for those who use scheduled public transport. The downside is that the service is relatively infrequent (six times a day in each direction), provides no assistance for residents of other parts of the Peninsula, and does not serve the very large number of other post-secondary campuses remote from the Peninsula that residents may prefer to travel to.

It is clearly important for present purposes that the *PenBus* service be maintained. However, for the medium to longer term it is much more important that public transport services on the Peninsula be upgraded to provide for higher services frequencies, shorter running time and better connectivity with services elsewhere on the public transport network. For post-secondary students this would both improve travel times and provide practical access to more educational institutions than could ever be provided through dedicated point-to-point services to individual campuses from limited pick up points on the Peninsula. This is an element of the necessary "mainstreaming" of public transport services discussed earlier.

By way of illustration, there are a number of identifiable issues which currently inhibit the use of public transport by Monash University students who attend the Clayton campus and live in Rosebud. These include:

- the poor service frequency of the route 788 bus, with about a 45 minutes headway, and running time, where regard should be had for the potential to run at least some services express from, say, Dromana or Safety Beach to Frankston railway station;
- connectivity between the train and the 703 route bus from Bentleigh railway station to the Clayton campus; and
- Running time for the 703 route bus between Bentleigh railway station and the Monash campus, which is currently about 35 minutes.

On the latter point it should be noted that the grade separation of the Frankston line in Centre Road in Bentleigh and Clayton Road in Clayton, on the Dandenong line, both committed projects under the Victorian government's level crossing removal program, will significantly reduce route bus running time between Bentleigh railway station and the Monash campus in Clayton. These measures will facilitate road-based public transport, including the 703 route bus from Bentleigh station to Monash University, Clayton which will not only assist Peninsula residents that attend Monash University but, potentially, other Peninsula residents as well.

### **The local economy, community and place making.**

It is often perceived that the Peninsula is a place that residents leave every day, especially for work and for tertiary study. This is something the Shire no doubt is actively working to change so that more residents are able to live close to where they work and study, which would be more in line with the declared ambition of the Victorian government's *Plan Melbourne* metropolitan planning strategy.

The regrettable truth, however, is that the roads dominated transport agenda that currently prevails on the Peninsula is not conducive to the making of shorter trips sustainably within the Peninsula. As a consequence, local people often make and spend money well removed from where they live and which would otherwise be undertaken locally if public transport networks and services were up to scratch. It also means that transport costs reflected in higher motor vehicle usage, place a greater impost on household budgets.

The optimal development of local activity centres is also compromised where private motor traffic dominates trips by virtue of their space inefficiency. This is especially reflected in the direct as well as the opportunity costs associated with the provision of large volumes of free car parking in these centres.

Ready access to the road network, and especially collector roads, by public transport services, is especially important. Unfortunately, many estates on the Peninsula have been developed without regard for future access by route buses. The Peninsula is not alone in this regard and it should not be permitted to continue anywhere in Melbourne. Opportunities to retrofit the road network for route bus services should also when they arise.

## **Holiday visitors and tourism**

Holiday visitors especially during the Xmas-New Year and Easter periods and tourists are a major feature of life on the Peninsula and a significant element of the local economy and employment. However, the increased volumes of motor traffic and the associated pressure on available car parking is making life increasingly stressful for permanent residents in particular and may eventually erode the attractiveness of parts of the Peninsula as a holiday destination.

The fact that public transport is not being deployed to optimum effect during these periods is a major factor behind these emerging difficulties. For instance, the route 788 service which services all Port Phillip Bay beach side suburbs between Safety Beach and Portsea is the major route bus service on the Peninsula. Notwithstanding this it operates only on an average 45 minute headway on weekdays and an average 75 minute headway on weekends. It is well recognised that the service is non-functional as a commuter service, and is a major element in car dominance of Peninsula residents journeys to work. However, during the summer holiday period it does operate on a weekday time table on weekends and public holidays, which could make a positive difference in alleviating traffic flows on Point Nepean Road.

However, in the past Public Transport Victoria has not done enough to advertise the availability of the service, inadequate as it is, to visitors to the Peninsula, which means that a significant number of trips currently taken by motor car could be relocated to public transport. This is especially true of trips taken along the beach-side suburbs on Point Nepean Road where large volumes of traffic tangles with beach - side parking and shopping centre activity.

Typically, no holiday timetable information has been available at Frankston Railway Station nor on buses to cater for holiday visitors who could access the 788 service. The timetable information at bus stops is not updated for the holiday period which means that visitors are often seen standing at bus stops, initially baffled and then quickly frustrated, at the uncertain arrival of the next service. People very quickly abandon such service offerings for the supposed reliability of the motor car in an increasingly congested road environment. The Shire should pursue this as an issue, along with measures to assist on-time running, for them to be dealt with by Public Transport Victoria before holiday visitors arrive in numbers on the Peninsula this summer.

Since 30 October 2015, real time information on arrival times at all stops for all route buses that service the Peninsula has been available on smart phones and the PTV web page. The availability of this resource should also be made widely known to the public.

## **Walking and riding to school**

The draft strategy notes difficulties in attracting more children to walk and ride to school rather than being driven to school. Such programs have worked very well in areas where the school community recognises their value and are willing to put the work into making it work.

The benefits to be gained, in health and mobility, in taking pressure off the road network, and in maintaining urban amenity, are substantial.

The best initial approach may well be to identify a school or schools which are most conducive to the introduction of these programs. These are likely to be characterised by higher population densities within ready walking and cycling distance to the school and with adequate networks of footpaths and cycling facilities in the neighbourhood. The programs that work best are those that project walking and cycling as mainstream forms of mobility and not narrowly directed at travelling to and from school. Many participants in successful programs are likely to view sustainable transport as a default or primary transport option as they move into adulthood.

## **Conclusions**

It is recommended that in finalising the strategy the Shire should recognise that the inadequate provision of public transport is the major impediment to the achievement of sustainable transport for Mornington Peninsula residents and visitors and that the traditional approach of simply anticipating a "need" for more road and public car parking space is counter-productive to the achievement of sustainable transport. In this respect, the provision of information systems to assist access to sustainable services, as outlined in the draft strategy, whilst of benefit does not resolve the issue of inadequate service provision. The Shire has a central role to play in campaigning in concert with the local community for improved public transport services.

Whilst specialised services, such as are currently provided by the *PenBus* operation, are able to provide a standard of service that significantly assists targeted client groups, to meet the multifarious needs of Peninsula residents and visitors cost-effectively the major focus of activity should be the development of a comprehensive high quality network of public transport services within the Peninsula and beyond.

Breaking or reducing the dependence on employment and services remote from where people live depends vitally upon the provision of high quality public transport services. These need to be linked to sustainable land use policies which counter tendencies towards sprawl and maximise the efficient use of space and resources in local activity centres.

The potential people moving capacity of public transport during weekday peak periods and during holiday periods needs to be fully appreciated. On average, cars on major roads in Victoria are occupied by 1.2 persons. Public route buses are licensed to carry about 80 persons and are often fully loaded on the Peninsula, even though service standards are very poor. The Council has a significant opportunity and central role to play in publicly highlighting failures in service delivery and to secure prompt remedies.

Programs such as walking and riding to school play an important role in introducing young people to the merits of sustainable transport. There needs to be a focussed approach to delivering these projects in schools that enhances the prospect of wider take up based on learning from schools that achieve large and durable reductions in the numbers of children who are driven to school.