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The Newsletter of the Public Transport Users' Association Incorporated.
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The Public Transport Users' Association

The PTUA is a voluntary non-profit organization of public transport users. It has no political affiliations.

Its function is to lobby the Government for a modern, adequate, efficient public transport system. Our plan for improved public transport calls for optimum use of trains, trams and buses in the interests of our scarce fuel resources, and protection of the environment. It also calls for the incorporation of the advantages of the various modes of transport in the most cost-efficient and energy-efficient manner.

The PTUA prepares briefs and submissions, liaises with transport managers through regular meetings, makes representations to the Transport Minister on suggestions, complaints and the like. It conducts media interviews, speaks at public meetings, prepares articles and letters to the press, and publishes and distributes leaflets.

The PTUA is affiliated with TRANSPORT 2000 International, a federation of like organizations in other countries.

Meetings

Members are invited to attend PTUA Council and annual general meetings.

The PTUA Council meets on the first Wednesday each month (except January) at the YWCA, room 10, Level 3, 489 Elizabeth Street, city at 5.30 pm.

The Annual General Meeting is usually held in July. The business segment of the meeting includes election of office-bearers and the presentation of annual reports.

Membership

Membership includes regular issues of our informative newsletter for the basic subscription of \$6 annually (\$10 for two years). A concession membership is available for \$4 a year (\$6 for two years). Those who can afford to are invited to become Donor Members at \$15 per year (\$25 for two years), or to make donations towards the cost of printing, postage, hire of halls and so on. All members have equal status.

Newsletter

Transit News & Views is published by the PTUA primarily for its members. The intended readership also includes members of parliament and the press, radio and television. The content of *Transit News & Views* is often of a different kind from what one might normally find in a newsletter. Articles may be informative and/or opinionated and/or have a distinct lobbying bent.

Members are encouraged to contribute articles to the newsletter. Members may like to assist in its preparation on a regular or casual basis.

Articles

Articles submitted for inclusion in the newsletter must be **double-spaced**, whether typed or hand-written. Articles should, wherever possible, be typed.

TRANSIT NEWS-N-VIEWS

Editor & production:

Typesetting:

Proofreading:

Robin Vowels

Robin Vowels

Ray Walford

We'd like to be able to acknowledge in the same issue those tireless workers who assemble the Newsletter and prepare the mailing out, but that isn't possible because the Newsletter is printed first. Instead, we include the names of those who have assisted in recent issues, and without whose help none of this would be possible.

John Alexopoulos, David Bowd, Peter Brownbill, Paul Mees, Patrick O'Connor, Margaret Pullar, Doug. Sherman, Robin Vowels.

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Because a great deal of manual labour is involved in preparing each issue of *Transit News & Views*, mistakes occasionally occur. If you should receive a faulty copy of the newsletter, ring for a new copy.

Address all correspondence, except subscriptions, to Hon. Secretary PTUA, c/o Ormond 3163.
Address subscriptions and payments for discount tickets to Hon. Treasurer PTUA, Rosanna 3084.

St KILDA LIGHT RAIL

What the conversion to light rail means (as per the Government's plan):

- Rebuilding the 6km of double track rail line, possibly embedding in concrete, and converting the gauge from 5'3" to 4'8½". [Emerald Hill Times 15/1/87]
- Building new low-level stopping places *adjacent* to existing platforms at South Melbourne, Middle Park, Albert Park and St Kilda.
- Abandon existing platforms.
- Auctioning off the existing station buildings [Age 9/4/87].
- Rebuilding the overhead and support between Albert Park and Middle Park railway stations, with changes to the overhead generally. [EHT 15/1/87]
- Installing 600 volt electric power substations to provide power to replace the 1500 volt system.
- Boosting the power to the Brunswick tramline to support the light rail vehicles.
- Ripping out the electric signalling.
- Closure of Tram route 12 (60% of passengers for the light rail service will come from other routes, according to the MTA. However, this is probably an over-estimate, a point supported by the Russell review.) [PTUA leaflet, and Letters, EHT 29/1/87]
- Cutback of tram route 15/16 to St Kilda Station. [Dr C. Sowerwine, Letters, EHT 29/1/87]

How the waste can be avoided:

- Use light rail vehicles with broad gauge bogies and air suspension (eliminates rebuilding the track and changing the gauge. It also makes it possible for the vehicles to be used on other lightly-used lines at off peak times.)
- Retain existing overhead. Avoids providing conversion and rebuilding costs, and avoids installation of new substations.
- Use existing platforms (avoids building four new platforms, but requires provision for entry from present-level and low-level platforms).

The curious thing about the Government's proposal is that it will not have more than a couple of light rail vehicles with which to implement the service in September. Nor is there any likelihood of this position improving. Plans are to use ordinary trams, supplemented by a few LRVs. COMENG, manufacturer of the LRVs, is fulfilling an existing overseas contract, and has just won another. In order to meet the requirements of the former contract, assembly of some vehicles is being undertaken in Queensland. With the recent contract coming on top of the earlier one, COMENG's LRV capacity will be taken up for quite some time in meeting other contracts.

RENEWAL REMINDER

If your address label is bordered by asterisks, your subscription has expired, or is due for renewal shortly. Please forward your remittance as soon as possible. Membership subscription rates are displayed on page 2, along with the Treasurer's address.

For those who are non-members, please consider receiving this magazine on a regular basis. There is no joining fee, and the rates are very reasonable.

The PTUA held a press conference to release its submission to the Russell Review, on the St Kilda & Port Melbourne issue. Two views are shown of the recent orderly delegation which was to deliver the PTUA's submission to the Ministry. The delegation included representatives from local schools, as well as schoolchildren. The delegation was barred by security guards from entering Transport House (589 Collins Street) when they attempted to deliver the submission to the Ministry, which had called for public submissions. Subsequently, one person was permitted to enter the building to present the submission. (Cover and page 11)

THE TRANSPORT TALES — by Harvey Chaucer

In nineteen-eighty, so it seems,
 there was a minister whose dreams
 aspired to a transport empire
 in which trains end in funeral pyre —
 replaced with buses. A similar fate
 for trams — why did he them hate?
 Who recalls his name? — don't tell 'em;
 let 'em guess — it rhymes with Ellen.
 Pursuing the Circean idyll
 existentialist-like to get his fill,
 he chanced upon a prophet only;
 a veritable wizard — this man was Lonie.
 Fresh from BHP — a committee did he form;
 told his readers he could transform
 trains into buses and taxis, by magic tricks
 detailed in some reports — we told him: nix!
 Blindly pursuing that ambition
 cost a government an election.
 Hot on the scene was the transport saviour
 hailing from Knox — he said he'd save you
 from the transport mess. He reinstated
 train services that had abated.
 He appointed managers to run
 new authorities to make them hum
 efficiently — ooch mon, thayrre's a ladde,
 we think you'll recall his name was Crabbe.
 He built new trams and trains,
 but still they break down when it rains.
 Then there was a drive to shed
 redundant workers, so it's said,
 but after all was organized —
 (no-one could believe their eyes)
 they had more workers than before —
 a mere eleven hundred more.
 Alas, the Minister moved on to score
 industrial relations — surprise in store —
 came gentleman from Health with prescript'n
 to cure the ills of our transport system.
 At job losses a railway union peeved
 held rolling strikes that displeased
 travellers and freight users. Back to roost
 their chickens came — more jobs were lost
 in freight than they thought possible.
 More friction, more strikes — oh, it was horrible.
 All went quietly for some time 'till
 belt tight'ning gave us more than our fill
 of late and cancelled trams and trains
 which — unfortunately — caused us pains.
 It seems the government had directed
 that no more staff could be elected

to replace those who had left employ.
 (It seems this is a regular ploy.)
 Without the men to run the system,
 the trams didn't run — we thought we'd missed 'em.
 And then there was that dreadful debacle
 when super trains became a spectacle.
 "Out of gauge", they cried. "Too dangerous
 to use; we'll take them out." Ludicrous,
 for management knew months before
 that wheels were worn. Oh, *what* a bore.
 Full circle now the wheel has turned;
 they're closing train lines — bridges burned.
 Once more they're cutting services of trams,
 deleting routes (hence losing fans).
 From St Kilda and Port Melbourne too,
 you'll wish there was a train for you
 to take to Flinders Street. Alas!
 Quite soon the time will come to pass
 when Bourke Street will be their destination.
 Such things still cause us consternation.
 A rose by any other name would smell
 as sweet; a Lonie Report however well
 disguised would reek as high. The MTA
 and STA reports of March of that ilk are,
 with contractions of lines to put to shame
 the Lonie papers as being too tame.
 The impetus comes from way up high,
 somewhere in the ministry.
 These fearful cutbacks to implement
 required a man skilled in management
 brought in 'specially to fill that role —
 goes by the name of Ingersoll.
 If there's a moral to this tale, 'tis this:
 If ailing transport you should have,
 don't call a doc with reputation,
 or you'll end with amputation.
 But more than anything you should try
 to run things more efficiently.

* * * * *

The Government's planned expenditure of \$25 million on the light rail scheme for the St Kilda & Port Melbourne lines would finance one of the following:

- * Two XPT trains (which could run on the St Kilda & Port Melbourne lines, but would actually be better off on the Sydney/Melbourne run);
- * Electrification of the Geelong line to Geelong;
- * Extension of all tram routes by 2km.

Which would you rather have?

THE CHAMELEON LINE

The Government's plan to abandon the Flinders Street terminus of the St Kilda & Port Melbourne railway lines, and to replace the remaining portion with a light rail service, seems likely to turn into a hot political potato.

The Government claims that it consulted users. It did just that when it called for submissions on transport in the area, immediately after restoring services on both lines when it came to office in 1982.

Prior to 1982, residents and users had campaigned to have rail services restored. The issue cost the local member Mr B. Dixon his parliamentary seat.

Out of the blue, the Government claimed that what everyone wanted was a light rail line going from St Kilda & Port Melbourne, and diverging from the existing reservation to Clarendon Street, Spencer Street, and around a city loop consisting of Collins, Spring and Bourke Streets.

No one could have been more surprised at this than the users, most of whom used the lines to get to Flinders Street Station to transfer to other trains, or to work or shop in the vicinity. It didn't matter that alternative existing services already went to these other places (tram route 15/16 along Swanston Street, tram route 10/12 along Collins Street, bus route 203 along Russell Street).

Came a change of transport minister, and the scheme changed too.

The new route is planned to take in Clarendon Street, Spencer Street, Bourke Street, and to continue through the city to East Brunswick, right through the Minister's electorate. Amazingly, the MTA discovered, "a large majority of travellers on those lines commute to the Spencer Street end of Bourke Street". [Sun 15/1/87] What nonsense!

The PTUA has long disputed the phoney MTA patronage figures. The MTA realizes that if the route changes to Spencer Street, about half of the passengers will alight at Spencer Street to take a tram or train back to Flinders Street. The others will take a train to other parts of the rail system. Thus, reasons the MTA, Spencer Street is where everyone wants to go.

It is just possible that the phoney argument about Bourke Street was coined to "justify" avoiding rebuilding the Sandridge rail bridge — a cost which the PTUA claims was phoney also. This is a clever shift in tactic. Instead of justifying the switch to Spencer Street because of the expense in repairing the Sandridge bridge, they have manufactured the line that no-one wants to go to Flinders Street anyway.

Those who fought (and voted) for the restoration of the service must now feel betrayed.

That the Government should come up with this plan makes a mockery of the word 'consultation' — few people who use the trains want to go to Spencer Street, and fewer still on a service that will more than double the trip time. Residents and local lobby groups are up in arms. Opposition has intensified since work commenced in February, escalating from demonstrations and strikes to pickets and fights.

On 23rd January, the PTUA held discussions with Mr A. McCutcheon, MLA for St Kilda, who agreed that "there were 'areas of concern' about the proposed change of route into Spencer Street", and "concern about the cost of the change of route, and the questions need to be legitimately answered". [Emerald Hill Times 29 Jan. 1987]

In January, the PTUA called for a public inquiry, headed by an independent consultant. (ibid.)

After opposition became physical, Mr Roper set up a two-week inquiry headed by an "independent" Mr Russell former chairman of the Road Traffic Authority. [Age 28/3/87]

Even before the results of the inquiry were announced, residents were already expressing fears that the "independent" inquiry would be a whitewash, because Mr Roper said that the project would go ahead. [Age 4/4, 9/4, Herald 23/4] And so it seemed to be, for the Report

concluded that the Government's controversial scheme should go ahead. The bias of the review was no better illustrated graphically than by the report's remark that buses could do the job quite well (with the overtone that the lines should be closed). [Age 24/4]

And the Government decided to get heavy with rail unions through the Trades Hall Council (ibid).

It seems likely that this will not be the end of the matter . . .

— R. Vowels

THE DOWNGRADING CONTINUES

YARRAM LINE: The electric signalling between Lang Lang and Korumburra was removed and replaced with a staff and ticket system (railway euphemism for a manual system with handwritten authority) on 11 July 1986. [Newsrail March 1987]

The Welshpool-Yarram section of the line is already destined for closure as soon as the line becomes unfit for traffic (railway euphemism for 'as soon as the line falls to bits'). No maintenance is being performed, as from 8 December 1986. [Newsrail Feb. 1987]

ORBOST LINE: Stations at Bruthen and Nowa Nowa were not manned as from 25/7/86. Fernbank was de-manned from 1/12/86. [Newsrail March 1987]

There are plans to rip out the electric overhead beyond Warragul, and to use diesel locomotives. The existing electric locomotives are being withdrawn from service. [Newsrail Dec. 1986 and preceding issues]

MILDURA LINE: The Vineland (the sleeper plying between Melbourne and Mildura) was reduced from an a nightly service to three nights a week. The service was replaced by a daytime bus. V/LINE expects a 10% increase in patronage. [Newsrail Feb. 1987]

LINE CLOSURES IN 1986:

Piangil—Kooloonong (closed 7/1/86)
 Bolangum line
 Timboon Junction—Timboon
 Hopetoun—Patchewollock
 East Natimuk—Noradjuha and Carpolac
 Jeparit—Yanac
 North Creswick—Allendale
 Wedderburn Junction—Wedderburn
 Elmore—Diggara West
 Dookie—Katamatite
 Numurkah—Picola
 Bowser—Peechelba East
 Moe-Yallourn
 Traralgon—Cowwar
 Moulamein—Balranald (awaiting formal closure — requires agreement with NSW)

Except for the first two lines, these lines were closed as from 8/12/86.

TO BE PERMANENTLY CLOSED when the lines are no longer trafficable (that is, have disintegrated). Maintenance was halted as from 8/12/86.

Red Cliffs—Meringur
 Murchison East—Colbinabbin
 Rushworth—Stanhope
 Bowser Myrtleford
 Cowwar—Maffra
 Welshpool—Yarram

Sources: Newsrail Aug. 1986 and Feb. 1987.

Bringing argument down to the dollars^{oo}

ACCORDING TO the man behind the State Government's light rail project, Mr Ed Dotson, \$1 million is the figure that settles the debate.

Mr Dotson, general manager of planning for the Met, said that by installing light rail on the St Kilda and Port Melbourne lines the Government would be saving nearly this amount each year in operating costs.

"This is what's driving the project as far as we are concerned.

"It is \$1 million that we can use elsewhere to provide a service. That's the most important thing — other benefits will come later."

The other factor driving the Government on in the face of vocal opposition is the patronage numbers on the two lines.

Mr Dotson said about

3,000 people travelled on the Port Melbourne line each day and 7,000 used the St Kilda line.

"We are carrying that number of people elsewhere in the system each hour. Those sorts of numbers can be adequately and more cheaply carried on light rail vehicles.

This policy will mean the 15 and 16 trams along the St Kilda Esplanade will be reviewed once the light rail service is running because they will be travelling over the same track, Mr Dotson says.

Likewise, the 10 and 12 trams through Middle Park and the 201 bus in Port Melbourne will stay as they are — but will be looked at to see how people are using them once the light rail is operating.

"We are not withdrawing a service, but if people get

off a service because they find the light rail is faster or better for them we can't let the trams run up and down empty.

"It's not fair on the other people in Melbourne."

Mr Dotson says the government will not only be saving \$1 million, but the project will free up two train sets (costing \$12 million) and 13 trams from the East Brunswick line where the light rail vehicles will travel (costing \$12.5 million in total).

If these figures were added together, the \$27 million being spent on buying the light rail vehicles was almost matched, Mr Dotson said.

In addition, the light rail service would provide a more frequent service on both lines. There would be two more stops on the St Kilda line at Fraser Street and Wright Street and

both lines would have a stop at the City Road area.

Overall, door-to-door travel times would be reduced for travellers on the light rail service.

Another major benefit of the project in Mr Dotson's eyes — one that has attracted enormous criticism — is the Spencer Street-Bourke Street route.

"We will be delivering people into the centre of the city where they want to go.

"Almost half the people going to the city want to go to a corridor along Bourke Street, as opposed to nearly a quarter who want to go near Flinders Street."

The route through Bourke Street and up to East Brunswick also offered more interchange

possibilities "with a whole heap" of other public transport services.

Mr Dotson said another benefit of the proposed light rail system was the flexibility of extending the route.

"Running light rail down to Elwood is still being considered and there are the possible options of extending the light rail through the Station Pier development or west through Port Melbourne along Howe Parade."

The government was aware of the problem of access to light rail vehicles by the disabled and was looking at three options, Mr Dotson said. These were special vehicles, platforms and ramps in streets, and wheel chair lifts on the light rail cars.

Above, and on pages 9 and 10: Three views of the light rail project, as they appeared in The Emerald Hill, Sandridge & St Kilda Times of 23 April 1987, prepared by Sally Heath and Julie-Anne Davies. Courtesy of Emerald Hill, Sandridge & St Kilda Times.

Keeping Flinders Street link

THE PUBLIC Transport Users Association has maintained support for the introduction of light rail in the Bayside area.

However, it has been a vocal and energetic opponent to the Government's proposed light rail route to Spencer Street, through Bourke Street to East Brunswick. The association has campaigned for the retention of the Flinders Street link.

The association has conducted a number of studies of train users, and claims that patronage on the Port Melbourne and St Kilda lines is increasing.

In its submission to the light rail review, it said that not only were more people using the lines but "it is clear that the majority of those patrons wish to travel to Flinders Street Station, not Bourke

Street."

The association submitted an alternative plan for a light rail service that would run into Flinders Street.

"Our alternative runs into Flinders Street Station, which is where patrons want to go, along the existing rail tracks, to save money," according to the associations public relations man, Patrick O'Connor.

"It will cut travel times and costs, while preserving the historic character of the two lines and remaining fully accessible to the disabled."

The association says it would be a "folly" for the Government to proceed with an unpopular and expensive plan when a viable alternative is available.

It says Flinders Street Station has acted as a transfer point to other rail

lines and this is a major reason travellers on the lines used the train.

People whose city destination was remote from Flinders Street Station had alternative means of transport via trams, and buses, Mr O'Connor said.

The Flinders Street-Bayside route was "overserved in terms of capacity but not frequency in off-peak times." This was one reason why light rail should be introduced.

Conversion costs to rebuild the line to tramway standards were excessive.

"It is recommended that the existing gauge be retained and the light rail vehicles be constructed to broad gauge."

Other recommendations in the association's submission included the retention of existing stations and platforms

and the construction of additional stopping places along the route.

The light rail service should be extended along Barkly and Grey Streets for at least one kilometre in St Kilda and ultimately to Elwood, and to Garden City in Port Melbourne.

Connecting buses should be brought into the station precinct for security reasons and to encourage interchange.

Bridges along the route should be repaired to enable normal operating speeds on twin tracks, one pair of tracks should be retained for the combined St Kilda and Port Melbourne lines between Flinders Street Station and the point of divergence.

This alternative light rail service proposal would cost an estimated \$9 million and would offer a superior system, according to the association.

Totally opposed to light rail project 10

THE PRESIDENT of the Bayside Public Transport Association, Mr Noel Willis, says his group is "totally opposed" to the dismantling of the existing heavy rail lines.

He believes the main motivation behind the light rail scheme is the State Government's desire to reduce the deficit.

"The only beneficiaries will be the developers and the government," Mr Willis said.

"Spending \$40 million on this unnecessary conversion is an irres-

possible waste of taxpayers' money.

It could be used to extend and improve public transport in areas around Melbourne in desperate need of better services," he said.

Mr Willis ties the implementation of light rail to the proposed Southbank, Station Pier, St Kilda Marina and St Kilda Stauon developments.

"Light rail will inevitably lead to the construction of the Port Phillip Boulevard, Whiteman Street

Boulevard and the threat of the F 14 freeway to St Kilda," he said.

Mr Willis' association says the introduction of light rail in Port Melbourne and St Kilda is a test case for future closure of heavy rail lines in other parts of Melbourne - specifically, the Upfield and Sandringham lines.

Light rail will mean much slower and a more inconvenient service Mr Willis says. Traffic congestion in Clarendon, Spencer and Bourke Streets will result, and

parallel services such as the 201 bus from Garden City and the 10 and 12 and 16, 16 trams to St Kilda are also threatened with closure.

The declining patronage argument is discussed by the BPTA. On the St Kilda line, it says patronage has increased from 258,360 passengers' journeys in 1981, 82 to 529,304 in 85, 86 - this despite the fact that some stations are unmanned.

The group says the economic justification for light rail has been based

on insubstantial data and figure-juggling.

It also bases its case against light rail on inaccessibility of the vehicles to disabled people.

People in wheel-chairs stand no chance of travelling on the new service it says. Mothers with prams and the frail and aged will also be hit.

The dismantling of Australia's oldest train line is in itself reason enough not to go ahead with the project, according to the group.

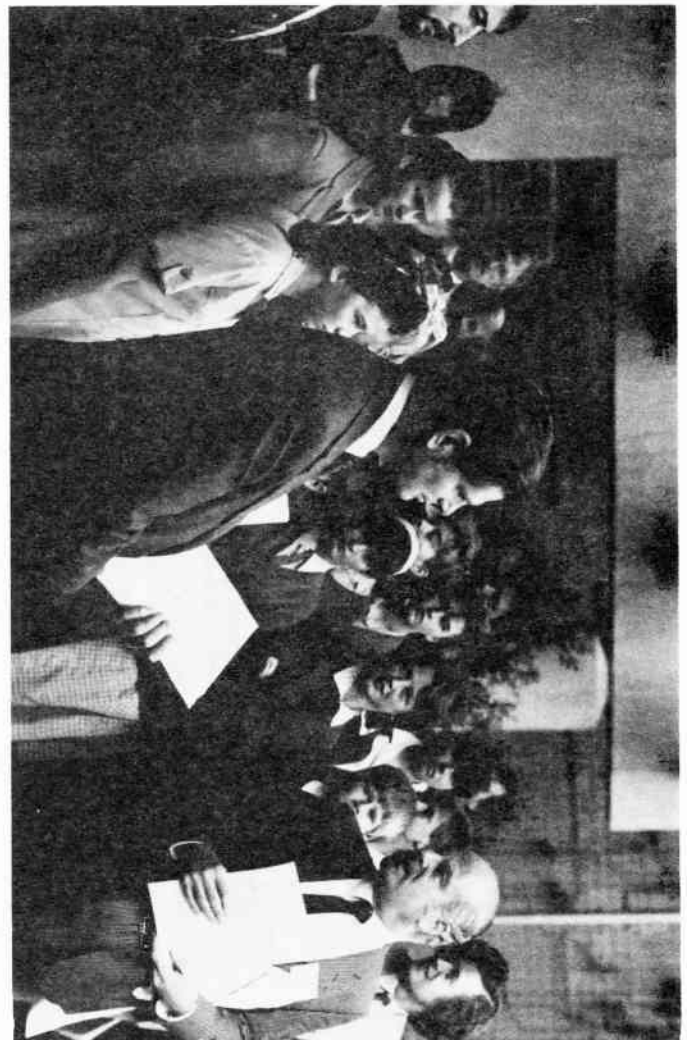
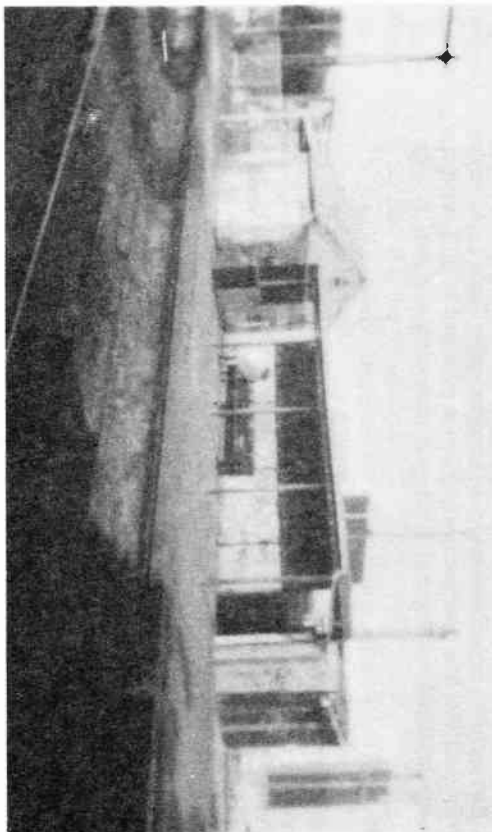
LOCAL NEWS

There was a community working bee on Sunday 3rd May to repair and paint Middle Park railway station as a demonstration to the Government of the community's opposition to its light rail scheme. [ABC Radio News 3/5]

The Russell Report - the Government's review of the St Kilda & Port Melbourne light rail project - recommended that the Government's scheme go ahead. A total of 75 individuals and groups made submissions.

Late News: The PTUA conducted a public meeting at the St Kilda Town Hall on Sunday 17th May to discuss the light rail issue. A report will appear in the next issue.

This disgraceful edifice on the inbound platform is the government's insult to Middle Park residents. Angered by impending closure, residents painted the surviving Victorian station building on the out-bound platform in Victorian colours, predominantly cream, with green, brown and black trimmings. It positively gleams!



NOISE LEVELS IN MTA TRAINS

On warm days, the noise level in Hitachi trains travelling through the loop becomes almost unbearable because of the need to keep the windows open for ventilation.

Recently, I had the use of a noise level meter, so I decided to do some checks in an Hitachi carriage and a Comeng carriage for comparison. On Thursday 26 February I set out on the 5.09pm outbound Lilydale (a COMENG train) from Flinders Street. On the Spencer Street to Flagstaff section of the underground city loop, the machine recorded a constant level of 70 decibels (dB). On this train, all seats were occupied and two or three people were standing.

I left the train at Flagstaff to catch the first following Hitachi train. This was the 5.40pm Belgrave train (trains were running approx. 10 minutes late owing to a defective train at Flinders Street — a common problem lately.)

The carriage in which I travelled had all its windows open as it was very warm inside and it was standing room only.

Through the Flagstaff to Museum section, the noise level measured was 95dB. Further on in the Museum to Parliament section, the figure was 93dB, while for the Parliament to exit section, it was 91dB.

Out of the loop (where there were no concrete walls on either side of the train), the figure was 82dB. Under the Burnley bridges, the train produced readings of 92-94dB, whilst the Camberwell cutting (which is notorious for all the clanking and clutter) noise level was 84dB, even though the train was moving at low speed.

I also checked the Fishermens Bend Met bus (Route No. 235) which I use daily. I measured the noise level at 76dB (checked from the third seat from the front) and — for interest — a bus pulling away from the southern side of the Flinders & Elizabeth Streets intersection produced a noise level of 88dB. (The meter was held at waist level and I was standing on the footpath with other waiting commuters.)

Results of the noise level study are summarised in Table 1. According to Kempe's Engineering Handbook 1986, the average hearing losses expected in 50% of the population after 40 years' exposure to 95dB may exceed 40dB — a very substantial loss!

— Malcolm Higgs

Location where noise was measured	Comeng	Hitachi
Underground	70	(Spencer Street-Museum) 95 (Flagstaff-Museum) 93 (Museum-Parliament) 91 (Parliament-end of loop)
Out of the Underground		82
Under Burnley bridges	92-94	
Camberwell cutting		84

Table 1

Note: All figures are in dB. The noise level meter uses "A" weighting (corresponding to the

sensitivity of the human ear), and noise was measured using the averaging method. All noise measurements were obtained by monitoring over approximately 6 seconds, except under the Burnley bridges where fast averaging was done. The average reading of 95dB in the Flagstaff-Museum section of the underground loop, corresponded to a peak reading of 105dB.

For comparison, Table 2 gives noise levels for a variety of environments.

Noise level	Environment
20-30	Quiet countryside at night
30-40	Quiet office environment
60-65	Conversation, general office noise
75-80	Nearby traffic in town
95 upwards	Beside very noisy machines

Table 2

LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS

Sir,

The installation of a third railway track between Caulfield and Moorabbin is now nearing completion, with an approximate cost over three years of \$18,679,000.

The Labor Government can no longer evade urgent questions that must be asked about this project. They are — "What is the purpose of the exercise, and where will the extra revenue come from that will justify the huge cost?"

The only coherent statement we have had so far is that the third track will cut ten minutes from the running time between Frankston and Melbourne; this seems a huge expenditure for a small result. No attempt has been made to increase patronage on the line, and there are insufficient commuter car parking spaces at any station between Moorabbin and Frankston.

No attempt has been made to upgrade the bus stop at Moorabbin Station, and there is no hint of new bus lines to service the extra express trains that will be running between Moorabbin and Caulfield. Some years ago the railways purchased land opposite Patterson Station and then ignored it, in spite of Moorabbin Council's attempts to have it developed as commuter car parking together with land that the council owns.

Even if the railways do awaken from their slumbers long enough to come to a decision, it will not alter the fact that the Patterson car park is at the wrong station.

Commuters who wish to catch an express train to the city will have to take the train to Moorabbin and change platforms before being able to do so.

This forlorn venture is the only sign that the government has a plan to justify what has become a huge addition to the railway deficit and running cost.

— Robert Lawson MLC,
Higinbotham Province

Sir,

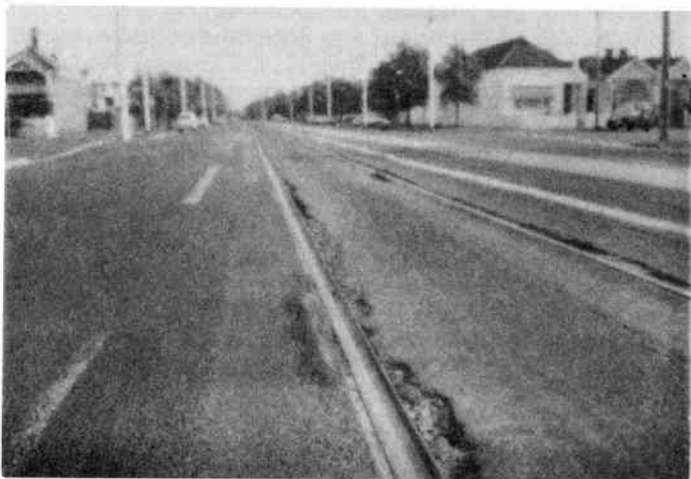
Recently, I had to wait 9 minutes at Richmond Station for a direct train to Flinders Street during the peak period. There are in fact no direct trains scheduled to leave Richmond between 7.39am and 7.48am.

I rang the MET public Relations (618-2300), and told them three loop trains [via Parliament—Ed.] had arrived and departed on platform 8 while we waited for the 7.48 "Direct to Flinders Street" train. When the 7.48 train departed, it was packed.

The MET lady then queried several points — was the train late? — no it wasn't, it was actually on time! — Did you realize that the "Direct to Flinders Street" train service from Richmond is very good before 7.39am and after 7.48am? — yes, I did. She then offered to check with the MET Operating Management and ring back.

The reply was that when the Operating Management had surveyed the service last, it was adequate. They do regular surveys on passenger numbers, and will survey the "Direct to Flinders Street" train service at Richmond again soon. They can't promise immediate action, but will remedy the situation if they find it needs it.

— Malcolm Higgs



In Middle Park, route 12 tram line falls into disrepair. Here, the road surface is 7 cm above the tram track, and the undercarriage of trams (including the pedestrian life guard) scrapes along the road surface in two places visible in the photograph. A pedestrian could break a foot on the protrusions, which are as high as a small step. The track at this spot has been in this condition since January. In other parts of Middle park, the road has subsided where, presumably, sleepers have rotted away. Generally, the track has sunk into the roadway. In most places, the rails are not visible from the footpath.

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A Labor government will have better rapport and control over the unions is their constant boast. In the last year of the Liberal Government, 2268 working days were lost through industrial disputes. In 1985/6, 44,836 days were lost. [STA annual report]

Where the Premier promised consultation with users, those consultations are held between management and unions. Services are oriented to meet union demands and not those of the users who pay for the services.

The unions dictate to the Government. Construction, building and maintenance work is given to the rail staff, yet private contractors can do the work 100 to 150 percent cheaper.

Other examples of waste of funds and of mismanagement resulting in the loss of millions of dollars include the loss of over \$30M in the Flinders Street Station Redevelopment, \$108M on the Box Hill project, the introduction of new bus services in the Central Highlands electorate, without any operational justification, as an election eve gimmick.

In 1981, the Labor Party in opposition vehemently opposed and demonstrated in the streets against proposals to close down rail and tram services and to replace them with buses. Now in office, it has closed down services, cut staff, and proposed further massive cuts and closures. So much for political hypocrisy.

"Put us in office and we'll do a better job in transport", was the boast of the Labor party prior to 1982.

For the first time in Victoria's history in 1986, all sections of the media, the community, and business leaders called for the closure of the rail system because of its critical financial and operational state.

This is a just reflection of the manner in which the rail system has been ruined after five years of mis-management.

— Ken McIntyre
Ormond

† Editor's footnote: Since this article was written, the Government essentially adopted the PTUA's submission to hand over security of the public transport system to the police. Guards have been provided with two-way radios.

THE TRANSPORT MESS

In 1982 the Labor Party rode into office on a public transport ticket with promises to improve the standards and efficiency of the services, to reduce costs and to give users a direct say in how the services are run.

Five years have passed and the services today are a shambles, from both an operational and financial sense. Disastrous levels of management have reduced our transport system to bankruptcy.

In the last year of the former Liberal Government 1981/2, the total transport debt was \$551M and the deficit was \$328M. Today the total debt is in excess of \$3,000M and the deficit is \$953M.

Millions of dollars have been wasted because of poor government and management control.

In 1983, the transport authorities were reorganized, and the rail system was divided into the MTA and STA components. There was an explosion in the number of managers — a three-fold increase, which in the first year alone added \$10M to the salary bill.

Studies, conducted by private consultants at the taxpayers' expense, highlighted unnecessary levels of management and unacceptable levels in incompetence and inefficiency. Despite these study reports which have not been published, a further 28 new positions have been created at an annual cost of \$600,000.

In 1984/5, the Minister arranged to cut expenditure through an early retirement scheme. Staff were to retire early with a golden handshake costing taxpayers \$95M. Out of necessity, the Government then employed a further 700 staff and ended the staff reduction plan with more staff than it had before.

Today the Government is planning to spend \$50M to get rid of another 850 employees.

On 21 November 1985, the Premier gave a clear assurance to the rail unions "that there are no proposals by the State Government to sack railway workers. We again repeat that undertaking." On 8 January 1987, the same premier announced that workers "will be sacked".

"Users will be given a direct say in how the services are run", says the Government. Party hacks with no expertise in transport are the user representatives on the boards of the MTA and STA; others are advisors and officials in the authorities.

In 1982, over \$3,000M was spent in the purchase of new COMENG suburban trains, which Steve Crabb as the then Transport Minister first publicly denounced as being defective! No prototypes were checked, no maintenance manuals, tools, or facilities to maintain them were available! Within the first two years of service, over 200 modifications and changes were made, and by 1987 the wheels were found to be defective!

A \$10M Train Indicator system set up in the loop has been out of order since 1981.

Records on punctuality and cancellations are cooked up and radio announcements on them were stopped in order to hide facts on poor performance. But \$650,000 was spent on a false advertising campaign to tell the public how good the services were!

Since 1976 we have continually called on the Government and managers to provide radio control systems in order to increase safety and to prevent vandalism. Action was slow, and in the meanwhile passengers have been raped, bashed, robbed at knife and gunpoint, and one was killed — not to mention the millions of dollars' damage caused by vandalism. The fact that the Minister and top managers do not use the services themselves explains their disregard for the users' needs.

Following strong pressure from the unions, the MTA took over the Melbourne Brighton Bus Company. No increase or improvements in services followed, but 41 additional staff have been employed to keep the unions happy. The taxpayer foots the bill!

(continued on page 14)

Downgrading & Cuts Continue

In October/November last year, the Prahran-City tram route 77, and the William Street services 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 53, 55, and 65 were discontinued.

Since then, the St Kilda-North Richmond tram service (route 79) has been withdrawn. This came about through a process of attrition this year, as crew shortages and late running forced curtailment of of the Chapel Street to St Kilda Beach portion of the route.

Passengers for St Kilda Beach now must transfer to the route 69 tram at Carlisle Street. However, reports coming in indicate that the route 69 service is being terminated at Balaclava Station on an ad hoc basis. Furthermore, connections are being missed.

Through short-sightedness, the MTA has ravished the Chapel Street service, and has transformed an interconnecting service (focussed on St Kilda) into an unconnected hotch-potch.

St Kilda is (was?) a mini-'mecca' for transport services. While four tram routes, one train, and at least three bus routes have their terminuses in the area, most are disjoint.

Some of the terminuses are now 2km apart, and to travel through requires a ride on three vehicles. Removal of route 79 increased the changes required. Consider getting from Balaclava to Middle Park. That trek requires travel on routes 69, 16 and 10 trams. (we know of at least one person who takes a taxi, as it isn't worth the hassle — there are probably others.)

In October last, tram services on the North Coburg route — the busiest in all Melbourne — were reduced by 20% during the day.

Graffiti

While we welcome the employment of 15 extras to remove graffiti from trains (Age 22/5), more should be done to stop the problem at its source.

First, convicted 'artists' should be made to clean up the trains they deface.

Second, have carriages been locked at off-peak times? — No, they haven't.

Third, have patrols on trains been increased? — No again.

Fourth, have patrols on stabling areas been stepped up? — (do we hear that refrain again?)

TRANSIT NEWS AND VIEWS

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Public Transport Users' Association Inc.,

c/o 61 Lella Road,

Ormond 3163,

Victoria,

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