

TRANSIT NEWS AND VIEWS

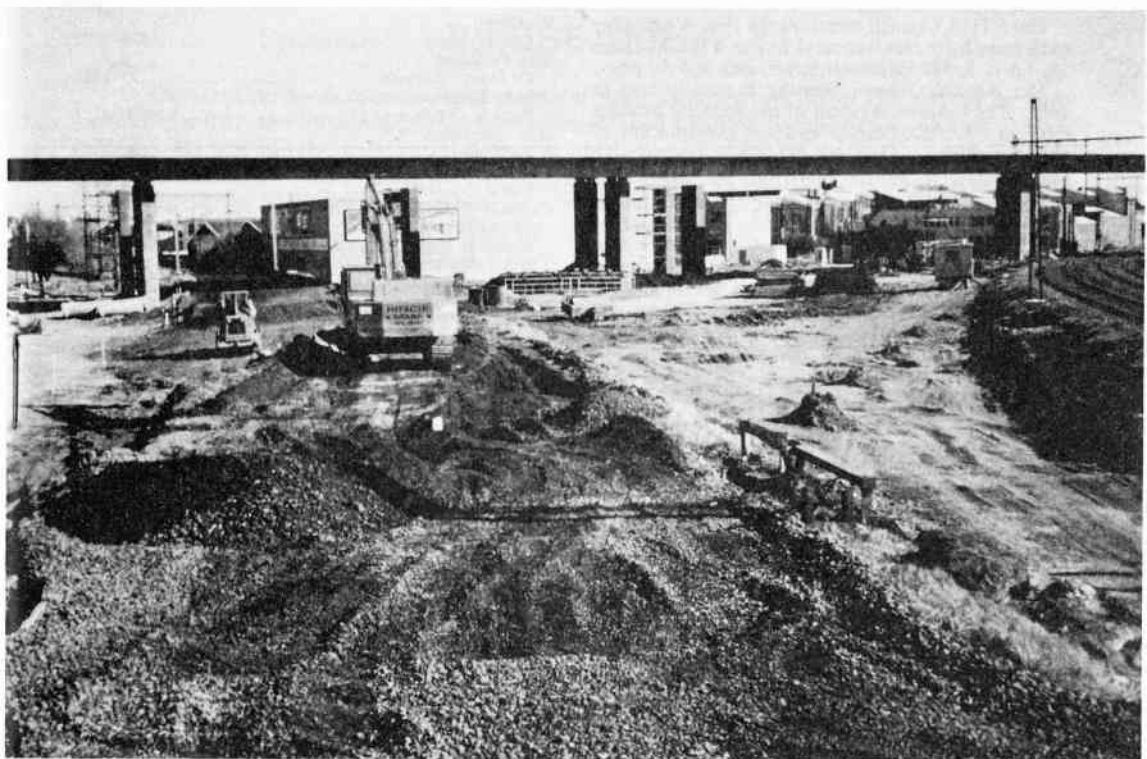
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Volume 11 Number 2



The Newsletter of the Public Transport Users' Association Incorporated.
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ST KILDA LIGHT RAIL PICTORIAL

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:

Robin Vowels

Typesetting:

Robin Vowels

Proofreading:

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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Office-bearers for 1986/7

President:

Ken McIntyre.....

Vice President:

Dr Doug. Sherman.....

Public Relations:

Patrick O'Connor.....

Hon. Secretary:

Paul Mees.....

Hon. Treasurer:

David Bowd.....

Council:

Peter Brownbill.....

Malcolm Higgs.....

Steve Howard..... (059)

Robin Vowels.....

Hugh Waldron.....

Ray Walford.....

MTA REGIONAL BOARD USER REPRESENTATIVES

Inner South-Eastern: Ray Walford.....

Inner Northern: Ivan Powell.....

Inner Western: Doreen Parker.....

Greensborough: David Bowd.....

Moorabbin: Rod Bryant.....

Dandenong: Daina Ozolins.....

Ringwood: Robert Lowe.....

St Albans: Charles Vella....., St Albans 3021

Frankston: Ray Scott.....

MTA BOARD USER REPRESENTATIVE

S. Kalbitzer....., Narre Warren 703-2641

STA BOARD USER REPRESENTATIVE

Lorraine Dean....., Wonthaggi

(056) (work) (056) (home)

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.

PTUA INITIATES COURT ACTION

On 30th July 1987, the Public Transport Users' Association initiated proceedings in the Supreme Court of Victoria, challenging the decision of the Metropolitan Transit Authority to scrap Flinders Street Station as the destination for the light rail project.

The action was initiated and prepared by the Association's Secretary Paul Mees, a solicitor, who is donating his services.

The grounds of the action as set out in the originating motion are that:

★ the MTA's decision to commence the project was taken without having regard to the achievement of the objects set out in the Act, and

★ the MTA failed to take into account such relevant considerations as the achievement of the objects set out in the Act, the existence of alternative routes for the light rail link which would have enabled the said objects to be achieved, and information known to the MTA showing that alternative routes for a light rail link would have enabled the objects to be achieved.

Plaintiffs in the action are Brother Roger Cripps as a representative of 310 school students, and Mrs P. Nichol, a St Kilda pensioner.

On 11th August a chamber summons was issued requesting an early hearing of the case. The matter was adjourned until 18th September in order that both parties could prepare affidavits which would enable the matter to be dealt with expeditiously.

— Patrick O'Connor

PRAISE DUE

Quick thinking by Fernando Mira, Assistant Stationmaster at Clifton Hill station on the night of the Clifton Hill massacre, unquestionably saved the lives of passengers waiting at the station. He got all the passengers from the north-bound platform onto the south-bound platform, across the tracks, lifting the passengers bodily onto the platform, where they lay down in darkness in the Stationmaster's office.

The operator of Signal Box B, north of Clifton Hill Station, Wayne Monahan, who had been alerted by Central Control, stopped the 8.40pm in-bound train from Hurstbridge, on the Merri Creek Bridge. He then ran along the track until he met the train, which was then reversed as far as the Westgarth Street level-crossing gates, because the gunman was already outlined in the train's headlights. The gunman followed the train, but kept his distance. [Age 15/8/87]

— R. Vowels

[Is there any connection between this shooting and the peppering of a train near Blackburn station a few weeks earlier? — Ed.]

Thank you to those who responded to our appeal for donations. We were overwhelmed with your generosity. However, the court case is likely to prove expensive, and we request those who did not respond to consider again if they are in a position to contribute. Many thanks.

Cover: *Whiteman Street South Melbourne: "This is the place for a light rail line" (with apologies to John Batman). Looking south over the site of the soon-to-be junction of the St Kilda & Port Melbourne tramlines. The old St Kilda viaduct has been bulldozed. Masts of the St Kilda line can just be made out under the West Gate Freeway extension (left photo), also under construction. Apparently the bulldozing is in anticipation of the proposed ground-level boulevard to Port Melbourne. To the right is a glimpse of the Port Melbourne rail line, the new alignment of which is evident from the line of mounds at centre, right.*

ST KILDA LIGHT RAIL MARCHES ON

As at Saturday 22nd August, the conversion of the St Kilda rail line to so-called light rail was fairly well advanced.

At the St Kilda end of the line, a turnout from the Fitzroy Street tramway to the edge of the St Kilda station precincts had been laid. Tram tracks from a point north of the old station had been laid part of the way on an alignment east of the old terminus, bypassing the station.

The platforms at Middle Park have all but been demolished, as have been the ramps on the west side. Two low-level platforms were partly constructed. The buildings, pictured in the May issue of *Transit News & Views*, had been demolished. The newly-painted original station building on the out-bound platform stood forlornly on a pile of earth, the remnant of the old platform.

At Wright Street, two low-level platforms, bare of any facilities, had been constructed.

At Albert Park station, the rail-over-road bridge had undergone surgery, and it appeared that the brick abutment and steel footings at the south end were in a poor state of repair. It appeared that these would be rebuilt. [On 12th September, forms were in place for a new concrete abutment.]

The northern ends of the old Albert Park platforms had been demolished, and replaced with two low-level platforms adjacent to the level crossing.

At South Melbourne, the north end of the platform had been reconstructed as low-level platforms.

At Whiteman Street and City Road, another low-level platform was taking shape, while about halfway along Whiteman Street could be seen the greatest changes to the line. The railway viaduct under the West Gate Freeway extension had been razed, along with several buildings in Whiteman Street, in preparation for re-routing the former railway into Clarendon Street.

Indeed, such was the haste to demolish that no hoardings had been erected, and the wall of one building in Whiteman Street had collapsed across the footpath, a danger to the public and against council regulations.

The overhead, track, and signalling cables had been removed for much of the length of Whiteman Street. The electric signalling cables — which could have been re-cycled — had simply been bulldozed.

It appears that the catenary overhead has been rehabilitated rather than being replaced with tramway-type overhead — a project that has seen an increase in the number of masts to support the overhead. This has undoubtedly contributed substantially to the costs of conversion, and was evidently brought about by the inferior-width of pantograph shoes to be used on the light rail vehicles. If a wider shoe had been used, the overhead could have remained much as it was, requiring only the replacement of the solid dropper wires with multi-strand wires.)

In Spencer Street, the triangular intersection was being laid in the ground ready for concreting, the north-south tramline having been severed, while North Balwyn and East Burwood trams were being terminated in Collins Street. The overhead for this intersection had been installed quite some time previously, as had crossovers for turning LRVs at the western end of Bourke Street.

At Bourke and William Streets, the overhead for a turnout from the west, for a south-bound turn into William Street, had been installed.

During the weekend of 6th to 7th September, the track for the turnout was installed in conjunction with a shunt in Bourke Street.

Apart from the new trackwork at the St Kilda end, none of the trackwork of the former St Kilda railway had been re-gauged from 5'3" to 4'8½". However, by the weekend of 29-30th of August, it is reported that conversion of the gauge was well advanced, having reached Albert Park from the St Kilda end.

— R. Fowles

ST KILDA DIARY

★ Work resumed on the St Kilda rail conversion project on 7th May after nearly a month's respite because of work bans. [Age 7/5/87]

★ The MTA may conduct a feasibility study into extending the controversial light rail system from St Kilda to Elwood. [Age 8/5/87]

★ The Government spent \$56,000 on 100,000 glossy booklets to be distributed to residents of Elwood, St Kilda, Middle Park, Albert Park, South Melbourne, Carlton, North Fitzroy and East Brunswick. The booklets were intended to refute "wildly inaccurate information being voiced by some about the project". [Herald 11/5/87] Incredibly, the booklets themselves contained wildly inaccurate and misleading information.

★ In June, the Government ordered two mini-buses to carry disabled passengers in anticipation of the St Kilda & Port Melbourne rail services being replaced. [Age 22/6/87]

★ The Government spent \$18,500 on an advertising supplement in *The Sun* on 1/7/87 to promote its light rail project for St Kilda & Port Melbourne. The supplement was claimed to be misleading, deceptive advertising. [Sun 2/7/87]

The most glaring of the Government's misleading claims appears on the first page of the advertising feature. A full-width artist's drawing shows a light rail vehicle (LRV) at South Melbourne platform, directly in front of the canopy. The platform is shown as normal height.

In reality, the existing station facilities are not to be used; the platform at the south end was lowered; there will be no canopy; and the adjustable platform steps in the prototype LRVs are to be removed, making it impossible for them to use a standard-height railway platform.

The Government's action in placing the deceptive advertising material is even more reprehensible because at least by June it had decided to abandon carriage of wheelchairs (refer above for order of special buses) and to use low-level platforms. Further, it had only two light rail vehicles which could handle loading from normal-height platforms. The first tram in its order for LRVs could not be delivered until Christmas (see below), even if it did have facilities for normal-level platforms. And work was already well-advanced with the construction of low-level platforms.

★ The Government signed a contract to buy 130 new double-carriage trams (LRVs) for the MTA. The trams will be built by Comeng Victoria, at a cost of \$184 million. [Age 14/5/87]. The first is expected to be available by Christmas. [Channel 10 News 24/8/87]

★ The Government claims that when the St Kilda & Port Melbourne lines are converted to light rail operation, it will get an extra \$350,000 in revenue, and will cut operating costs by \$1.3 Million a year. [Age 8/5/87] We have pointed out that if the \$25 million were invested at current rates (instead of converting the lines), the Government would have revenue on that investment of between \$4 and \$5 million a year, far in excess of what it will ever "save" by converting the lines.

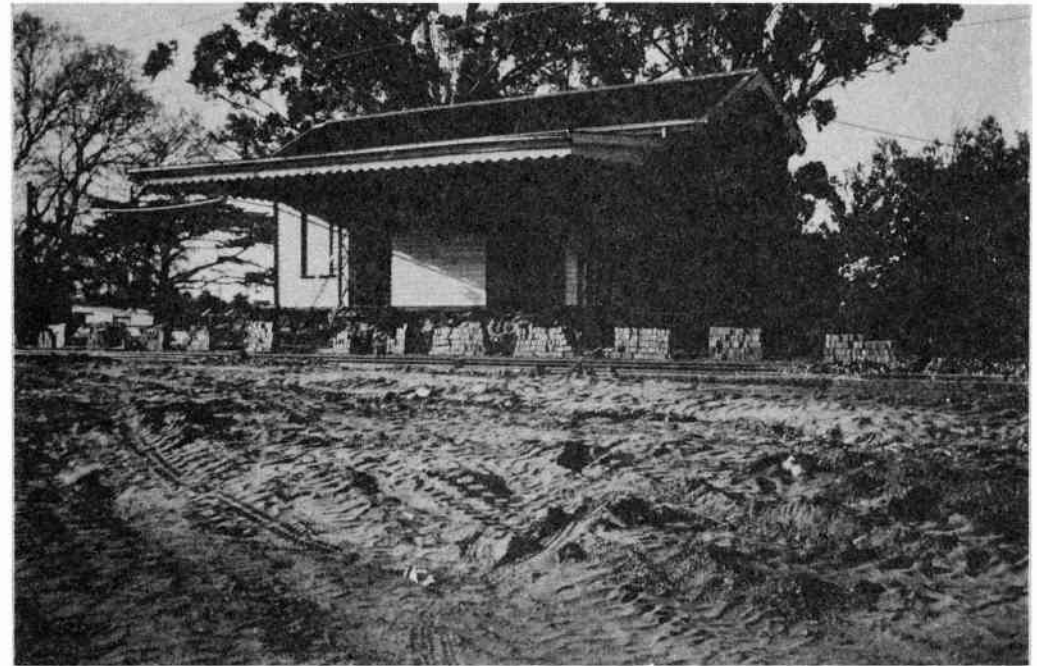
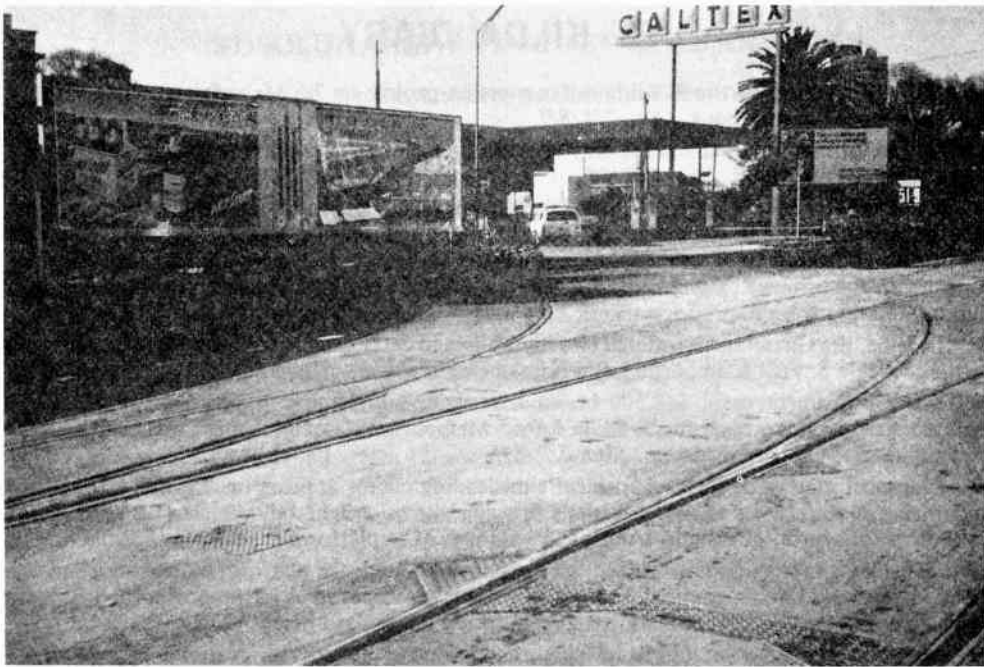
STAFF CHANGES

★ Mr Barry Watson, General Manager of MetRail, resigned after only 8 months in office. He resigned after being told his job would be abolished in a management restructure. [Age 11, 17/7/87]

★ The position of Deputy Director-General of transport was advertised nationally in the *Weekend Australian* of 4-5 July.

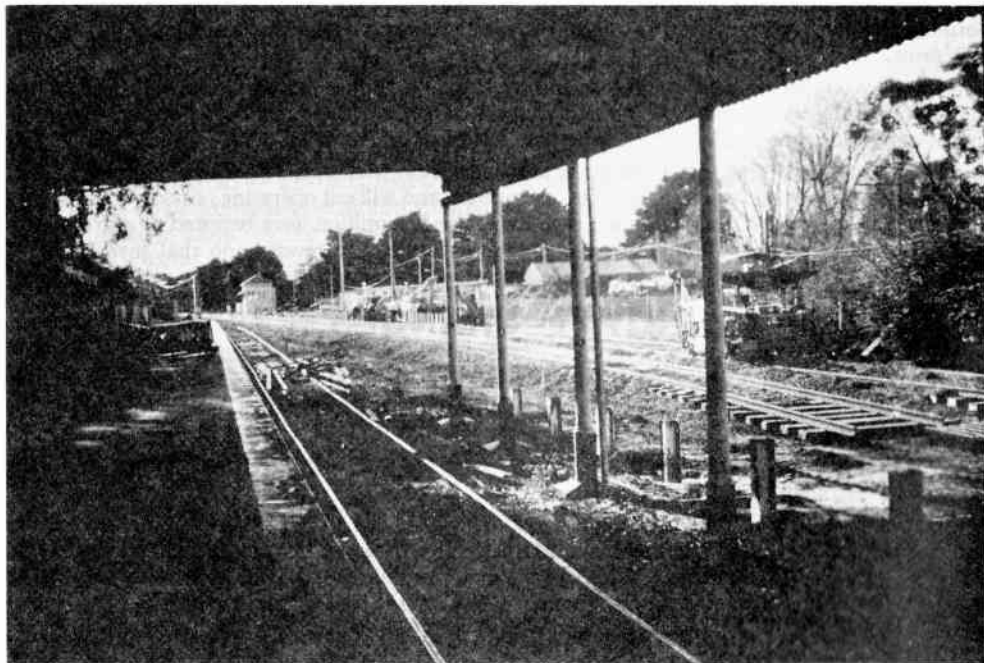
★ Mr Allan Scott was appointed deputy Managing Director in July, to streamline tram, train, and bus services. He had been with the MTA since May when he was brought in to develop economy measures to increase efficiency and cut running costs. Mr Scott is in charge of day-to-day running of the transport system.

★ Mr Kevin Shea, the former Managing Director, is now responsible for long-term projects and policy. [Age 20/7/87]



St Kilda: Looking north from Fitzroy Street — tramlines turn out to an abrupt end at billboards west of St Kilda Station. (Page 6, top)

St Kilda: A view from the platform showing the new tram tracks spreading south, bypassing the cover of the former St Kilda railway platform. (Page 6, bottom)



Middle Park: The ramp and platforms were razed at Middle Park Station where the resident-painted out-bound station building still stands. (Above)

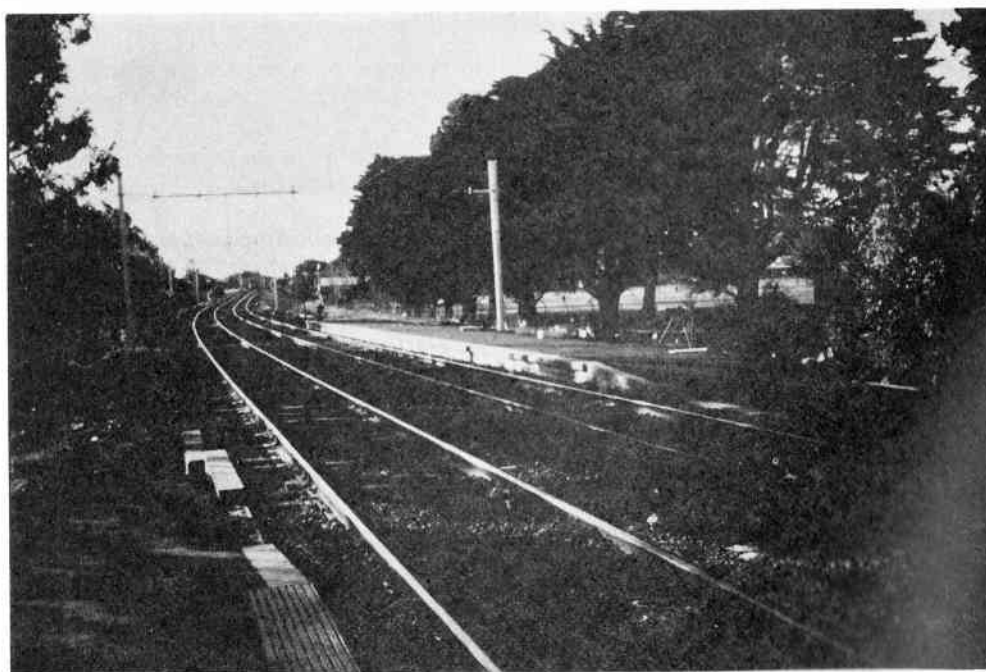
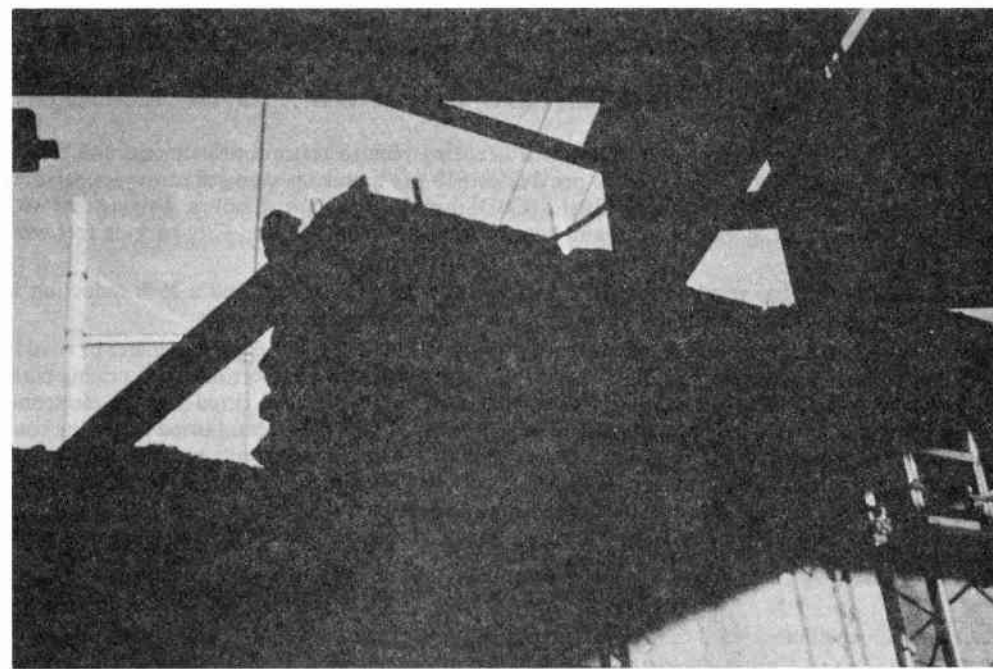
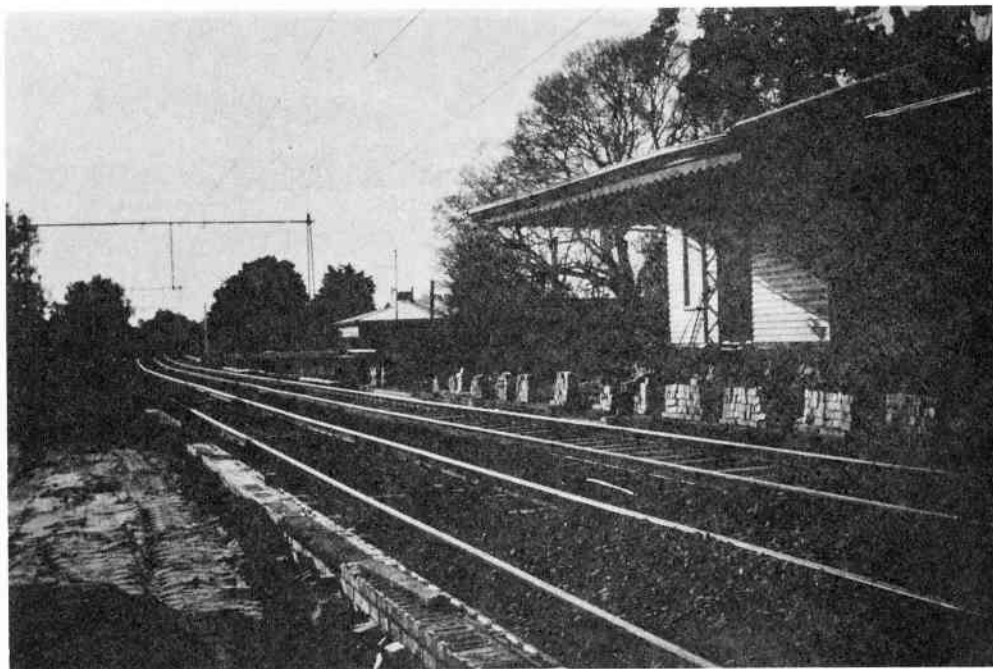
Middle Park: A view to the north at Middle Park Station, showing preparations for the new low-level platforms. The remnants of the former platform on the out-bound side can be seen in the background. (Page 8, top)

Wright Street, Albert Park: Two new low level platforms are virtually complete. (Page 8, bottom)

Albert Park: This view looking up from beneath the south end of the Albert Park rail bridge is made possible by the removal of the abutment of the out-bound side which was in a poor state of repair. (The abutment for the other track would be removed shortly.) New concrete masts for the overhead of the light rail line can be seen. (Page 9, top)

Bourke & Spencer Street: The Spencer Street tramline was severed (offstage right and left) while track for a triangular turnout is being laid for the controversial light rail route that will take the St Kilda & Port Melbourne lines away from Flinders Street Station. (Page 9, bottom)

The photographs in this issue, taken on Saturday 22 August, are courtesy of R. Vowels.



TRANSPORT NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

ROAD PRICING IN SINGAPORE AND HONG KONG

In 1975, Singapore implemented an area licencing plan to restrain private cars and relieve growing city congestion. A fee (\$2.50 per day or \$50 per month) is charged to low-occupancy vehicles entering the central business district (CBD) during morning rush hours. Private cars with four or more persons, goods vehicles and buses are exempt from the fee. City parking fees were also raised.

Area licencing has resulted in a 20% increase in city traffic speeds and a 25% reduction in traffic accidents. Revenues from the scheme have more than covered costs.

Hong Kong has the highest vehicle density in the world: 280 vehicles per kilometer of road in 1981. To alleviate acute congestion, the government is pioneering an electronic road pricing plan. Approximately 5,000 vehicles (mostly government-owned) have been fitted with an electronic number plate about the size of a cassette tape. Electronic loops have been buried under the road surface at designated charging points. When a vehicle with an electronic number plate passes over the charge point, information is transmitted to a government computer, recorded on the vehicle's account and the owner is billed monthly. Fees at each charge point vary with the time of day and location. After successful testing, the government intends to introduce the plan throughout Hong Kong.

— Courtesy of National Association of Railroad Passengers. USA Newsletter July 1987

PITTSBURG LIGHT RAIL

On 22nd May, Pittsburgh residents celebrated completion of a \$542 million (U.S.) light rail modernization project, at Castle Shannon station. Sixteen kilometers of Pittsburgh's 36km tram system were totally reconstructed during a six-year span. Tram services on a new city spur into an Amtrak station have not commenced, but are expected to by the end of the year. Port Authority Transit, the operator, now plans to rebuild the remaining 20 km.

— Courtesy of National Association of Railroad Passengers. USA Newsletter, July 1987

NEW YORK

The first Rame Turbine Gas turbo-train to be rebuilt by Amtrak will soon go into service on the New York City-Albany route. Two additional trainsets are currently being rebuilt at Amtrak's Beech Grove workshops, and should be in service by early 1988. These French trains were originally acquired by Amtrak in 1975, but were in storage for several years prior to rebuilding.

— Courtesy of National Association of Railroad Passengers. USA Newsletter July 1987

TRANSPORT 2000 — EUROPEAN FEDERATION

The public transport user groups in Europe have formed their organizations into a European federation inaugurated in London on 2nd and 3rd May 1987.

As a voluntary body, we could not afford to accept the invitation given to our President to attend the meeting.

The meeting of the world body signals the end of Dr Pierre Bermond's term in office as World President.

We had the pleasure of Pierre's company when he visited Melbourne on his world trip and had the opportunity to show him the transport system in the city and how our Association functions. Pierre has assisted in providing us with information on transport issues.

We wish Pierre the best of luck in his retirement.

The new world president — Harry Gow from Canada — is an old friend and keen supporter

of the PTUA (and of the former TTA). Harry has been in regular correspondence with me for many years. Harry receives our newsletter, and once commented, on reading of the comedy capers on rails that we have for a rail service, that he could not believe that our system was so bad.

Harry comes to the position with a wealth of knowledge and experience in transport, and will make a valuable contribution to the world body.

We wish the European federation all success in the campaign in Europe.

We congratulate Harry Gow on assuming the role of World President and wish him the best of luck.

— Ken McIntyre

SAFETY

OFFICER COLLISION

At 7.05am on 8/5/87, a V/LINE country train crashed into the rear of a stationary MTA Comeng train waiting for a green light outside Officer Railway Station. The V/LINE train was travelling at excessive speed in thick fog prior to the collision.

The V/LINE train had proceeded past a halt signal about 2km back from the collision. On impact, its speed was 38kph, even though it had braked.

Forty-five passengers were injured, and 35 were taken to hospital suffering cuts, bruises and shock. All were discharged later that day. Damage was estimated at \$1 million. [Age 9, 11, 16, 19/5/87]

The acting signal assistant at Pakenham had warned drivers of both trains of defects in the automatic signals, before each train departed. The driver and guard on the V/LINE train were disciplined. [Age 6/6/87]

Amazingly, both the driver and guard of the MTA train had left their train before the collision, in order to investigate the cause of their own signal being at halt.

We cannot imagine why both had left. The guard is required to protect the rear of his train, and why he left the train to investigate the track ahead is beyond all comprehension. Had he stayed at his post, he may have been able to avert a collision. In leaving the train, the guard possibly did not take with him his two-way radio. Perhaps if he had, he could have radio'd the driver of the following V/LINE train. Had he stayed with the train, he could have run back along the line to warn the V/LINE driver.

It is customary for the guard to set detonators on the line to protect the rear of his train. This was not done.

As this section of track is actually country (as distinct from suburban), perhaps the explanation lies in the fact that suburban trains were operating in an area in which country operating practices apply. It would appear then that the MTA suburban train should have been following country practices, and laid detonators.

RECALL OF TRAIN

In a breach of safe-working practice, A V/LINE train was called back to Bacchus Marsh when it was decided to change the crossover point from Parwan loop to Bacchus Marsh on the single track line.

It is thought that a —bound train had already been despatched from Parwan loop. If so, that was a serious blunder, because at that time, two trains would have been in the same section of track and heading towards each other. [ABC Radio News 20/5/87]

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

The PTUA is entering the twelfth year of its existence and its campaign for a better public transport system for the state.

As a purely voluntary organization which relies on its low membership fees for its finances, it is a tribute to our members and office bearers that we have completed eleven eventful years and are embarking on yet another year of our campaign.

The tenth Annual General Meeting was held on 12 November 1986 in The Victoria Hotel in Melbourne.

The following office bearers were elected for 1986/87:

President: Ken McIntyre;

Vice-President: Dr Doug Sherman;

Secretary: Paul Mees;

Treasurer: David Bowd;

Public Relations: Patrick O'Connor.

The following Council Members were elected:

Peter Brownbill, Malcolm Higgs, Steve Howard, Robin Vowels (Editor of the newsletter), Hugh Waldron, and Ray Walford.

At the meeting, Ken McIntyre, who has been with the Association since its inception, traced the history and activities of the organization over the past ten years.

In the year under review, we have continued our high level of activities, with the major campaign centred around the light rail issue in the St Kilda/Port Melbourne areas, and the transport mess in general.

Members will be aware from reports in our newsletter of our campaign in light rail over the past two years, the public meetings we held (the most recent one in the St Kilda Town Hall on 17 May) and addressed in this period, and the action of the government to close down the St Kilda line and proceed with the construction of its light rail route, against the wishes of local residents and ourselves.

For the first time in our history, we have resorted to legal action, and on 31 July 1987, we instigated legal proceedings against the MTA in the Supreme Court to stop them from proceeding with its construction of the light rail route.

At the time of preparing this report, the matter was still sub-judice.

Our secretary, Paul Mees, a lawyer by profession, has personally handled all legal matters on this issue, and we place on record our commendation and appreciation of his work, and look forward to a successful outcome of the legal battle.

During the year, we saw the successful implementation of our suggestion first given in 1979, to replace the Rail Police force with personnel from the state Police force. The replacement followed a drastic decline in passenger safety highlighted by the death of a passenger and several physical attacks, rapes, etc. Following alleged scandals and an inquiry into the Rail Police and Investigation Officers, the Government was forced to conduct a review of security. Our Association made a submission to the review, calling for the formation of a Transit Police force, manned by the state police, and which came into being in April 1987.

Since 1985, the transport system has been hampered by industrial strife centred on the need to reduce manning levels, and to reduce costs, because the services have been reduced to bankruptcy with the deficit exceeding \$2 billion. Numerous strikes, stoppages and work bans since 1985 have seriously inconvenienced users and non-users alike, traders, and other sections of the community, with each strike action adding to the losses incurred by the transport system.

In addition to the continuing industrial strife, the transport mess continued during the year with cancellations, delays, dirty trains and stations, and lack of security.

Following our call in 1986 for the removal of the Transport Minister because of the transport

mess, the Premier Mr Cain, fearful of a factional backlash if he did so, took over de-facto control of transport, assisted by Rob Jolly (Treasurer) and Steve Crabb (Labor).

The change has done little to improve the services, despite all the promises made by the Government before coming to office.

Despite an entirely new fleet of trains, a new signalling system and an explosion in the number of managers, the level of punctuality was 90% in 1986, compared to 92% in 1981/2.

The transport deficit which was \$5.51 million at 30 June 1982 has increased to \$2,089 million by 30 June 1986.

The Government continues to ignore the interests of users, while appeasing the unions with sweetheart deals at a cost to the taxpayer.

Despite our repeated calls to the Premier to solve this long-standing industrial problem and to consult with users on the proposed cuts in staff and services, we have had no responsible response from him.

The year under review saw further evidence of the dishonesty and double standards of the Government. In opposition, the Labor party vehemently opposed the closure of country rail lines. In the past year alone, the Government has plans to close the Leongatha line, has closed the Orbost line, with more closures planned for the year ahead. We will monitor these closures and keep Victorians aware of the double standards and dishonesty of the Government in the lead-up to the next state election.

Activities

★ The PTUA Council met on 11 occasions during the year at the YWCA premises in Elizabeth Street in the city. The average attendance of Council Members at each meeting was seven.

★ A public meeting on the light rail issue was held on 17 May 1987 in the St Kilda Town Hall.

★ Liason meetings were held with:

(a) the Shadow Minister for Transport Alan Brown and the Liberal Party Transport Committee;

(b) the Parliamentary Transport Committee of the National Party;

★ Several meetings were held with the councils involved with light rail in South Melbourne, Port Melbourne and St Kilda.

★ Several meetings were held with MTA officials on various matters concerning the services.

Submissions/Representations

Some of the issues on which we made submissions/representations to the Government/Transport Ministry were:

* STA plan for services in the year 2002;

* Rail security review;

* St Kilda light rail services;

* Metras road plan;

* Richmond train indicators;

* Safety on trains and vandalism;

* Motor Accident Compensation bill;

* Smoking on country bus services;

* Camberwell re-development plan.

Public Complaints

We, or rather, I, continue to be the liason between the public and the Ministry on complaints about the services. A suggestion we gave the Ministry in 1982 to introduce pre-printed cards to acknowledge public complaints, has been implemented in 1987 !

A large number of non-members use our resources and my time to have their complaints resolved, and then do not join the Association.

We have decided not to entertain or process complaints from non-members. It is still difficult, however, to stop non-members from contacting me on the phone, at all hours, with

their complaints.

Ticket Concessions

The concessions for yearly tickets from the MTA obtained through our Association, continue to be popular, and we look forward to more members making use of this facility.

Acknowledgements

In a voluntary organization where every office bearer freely gives his/her time and effort, it is my pleasure to have had the assistance of each one of them during the year, in the conduct of our Association. Each one of them has made his individual contribution, some in more ways than others, but each effort was valuable and deeply appreciated.

Our special thanks go out to all sections of the media — the four TV stations, the daily and Sunday newspapers, the ABC and the commercial radio stations and certain suburban papers. Special mention has to be made of the support and coverage given to our campaign by Tony Harrington (The Age), Bill Ayres and Terry Friel (The Herald), Sally Heath (Emerald Hill, Sandridge & St Kilda Times), Radios 3LO, 3AW and 3KZ.

Our thanks are due to each member of our Association who has supported us through the past eleven years and without whose financial and moral support, we could not exist.

It is vital for our success to continue to grow in strength and numbers.

For the year ahead and for the future, we need new blood and new ideas. I call on members who are interested to come forward to assist us in our activities. Members are welcome to attend our monthly meetings.

The year ahead

In the year ahead, we will have the lead-up to the next state election. We have a battle on our hands to;

(1) expose and highlight the dishonesty, double standards and blatant betrayal of the transport policies on which the Government came to office.

(2) continually highlight the inefficiencies in the services and the financial denigration of the system by the transport management;

(3) stop the reduction in the standard and level of services, and ensure we — the users — get value for our money; and

(4) ensure the opposition parties adopt our policies into their plans and official policy.

To achieve these objectives, I look to your continued support and assistance, and thank you for your support.

— Ken McIntyre

UNIONS PROPOSE REVAMPING WORKSHOPS

Rail unions have proposed that work be increased at V/LINE's railway workshops, a proposal they say would save 600 jobs that are currently threatened by the Government's cost-cutting plans.

The workshops are at Newport, Bendigo and Ballarat.

The union claims that new freight wagons could be constructed, suburban electric trains could be reconditioned, and additional work which would otherwise have been let to private contractors.

The unions say that \$25 million would be saved in redundancy payments, and suggest that this money could be spent on rail cars and carriages for country passenger services.

This appears to be a serious proposal, and deserves careful consideration. For an outlay in salaries of between \$12 million and \$18 million, offset by \$6 million in revenue, and a saving of \$25 million — admittedly once-off — the idea of some 600 workers constructing equipment and carriages seems very attractive. [Age 26/8/87]

STATE NEWS

★ V/LINE has introduced *Adventure Holidays* including skiing, trail riding, white-water rafting, four-wheeled drive tours, cycling and skydiving.

★ On 20 July, V/LINE introduced a "luxury" double-decker coach between Horsham and Adelaide, to connect with the day train from Melbourne, and thus provides daylight travel to Adelaide. The leased coach — worth \$425,000 — has reclining seats and videos.

Other luxury coaches are to be introduced between Albury and Adelaide.

★ The 'sports saver' ticket is designed to attract country residents to Melbourne for sports events. By purchasing a "Sports Saver" card (\$32.90 per half year), commuters can get 40% off day return tickets to sports events. The ticket also works in reverse — Melbourne residents can visit country sports events.

★ The reorganized road-coach network between Melbourne, Hamilton and Mt Gambier has seen a 27% increase in patronage.

★ Changes have been made to services in the northern region of the state from 2nd August.

★ V/LINE is planning substituting buses on the Leongatha and Cobram lines.

★ Coaches are to be introduced between Melbourne and Apollo Bay, duplicating V/LINE's own Melbourne to Geelong train and other private bus services, and between Bairnsdale (Vic.) and Merimbula in NSW.

— [Age 8/7, 11/7, 10/8/87]

ORBOST RAIL LINE CLOSED

The Bairnsdale to Orbost line in East Gippsland was closed on Friday 20th August. (Age 15/8/87)

Block trains, carrying timber from Orbost and limestone from Nowa Nowa direct to Melbourne, are the principal traffic on the line.

The line has been allowed to deteriorate, until at the time of closure there were 40 serious faults on the line which could derail trains. Some faults were on or near bridges. Some sections were restricted to 15 kph.

This line was one of many that were recommended for closure by the 1980 Lonie Report. However, the year-round trains carrying timber and limestone — non-seasonal commodities (as distinct from grain which is decidedly seasonal) — were a major factor in deciding to continue the line then.

If it was worth saving then, it is worth saving now. No-one wants timber semitrailers on the light country roads of East Gippsland. They are a menace to safety and they break up roads, and force cars into dangerous evasive manoeuvres. Heavy freight should continue to be sent by segregated rail. There is no guarantee that the timber semi-trailers, once loaded, will not continue all the way to Melbourne, as there now must be double-handling if the goods are to continue to be sent by rail. Nor is there any guarantee that the Bairnsdale to Sale line will not now close.

Has the Ministry shot itself in the foot again?

The very task that V/LINE says is most profitable (namely block trains) and it is going to concentrate on, V/LINE is cutting out.

It seems that this all-weather line could well be used for tourism as well as freight, taking in the limestone caves at B , for example.

— R. Vowels

STATE NEWS

★ Country train and bus fares were increased by 6% from 1st July. The Geelong-Melbourne fare increased from \$4.60 to \$4.90.

Metropolitan fares increased by 6% also, from 5th July. The increases ranged from 5¢ to 30¢. A two-hour Inner Neighborhood ticket increased from \$1.20 to \$1.30, and the all-day ticket increased from \$2.30 to \$2.40. A Travel Anywhere ticket increased from \$4.70 to \$5.00. [Age 29/5, 27/6]

METROPOLITAN NEWS

★ The Caulfield to Cheltenham rail triplication project was completed at a cost of \$30 million.

Express trains are expected to be brought into service over the ensuing three months. (Why three months? — didn't MetRail know about the triplication? — Ed). [ABC Radio News 13/7, Age 7/7/87]

★ The Government has spent \$19 million on the new boulevard (i.e. freeway) between Queensbridge Square and Nolan Street in South Melbourne.

Construction involves a new road between the corner of City Road and Maffra Street and the corner of Nolan and Sturt Streets.

The cost so far includes land acquisition, demolition and roadworks. [Herald 5/8/87]

★ Vandalism is costing MetRail \$4½ million each year. MetRail is to have a 15-member cleaning squad to clean graffiti from railway carriages. [Age 21, 22/5/87]

If you were wondering why until then so little had been done, it was because there were only 4 cleaners employed from Monday to Friday, and 20 employed over the weekends.

As of the 1st of August, the new cleaners, if any, had made no significant impression on the deluge of graffiti.

★ The MTA spent \$45,000 to obtain school students' opinions about the public transport system. 250,000 students were involved in the survey. [Age 25/5/87]

★ The Transport Ministry spent \$160,000 advertising that the turning restrictions that currently apply on tram fairways had been abandoned. (ibid)

It might have been more appropriate to advertise within the police force so that offenders might be booked!

★ The MTA purchased 20 used Leyland buses from Sydney for transporting school children. [For 'used' read 'clapped out', as the buses are up to 18 years old] [Age 5/5] The buses were banned. [Age 30/7]

CUTS WITHOUT LOSS OF SERVICE

"Mr Russell Ingersoll, the Director-General of Transport, said staff cuts (3020 during the past two years as part of a streamlining program) had brought significant savings without loss of service to the public." (Age 13/8/87)

Really? He must think the public have forgotten that since October, the Chapel Street tram service (Route 77) has been cut out, route 79 was terminated at Prahran (since re-instated with a limited service to St Kilda Beach), that route 69 services were being truncated at Balacava Junction, that route 77 trams (when still in operation) and route 88 (Footscray to Moonee Ponds) trams were being seriously disrupted with regular cancellations because of staff shortages.

He must also have overlooked the withdrawal of all William Street services from southern suburbs (Routes 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 55, 65). And not to mention the reduction of services by 20% on route 19.

— R. Vowels

METROPOLITAN NEWS

CHAPEL STREET

For much of this year, the principal service in Chapel Street (tram route 79) has been truncated at Prahran, owing to a shortage of staff, trams, and inadequate timetabling. Difficulties in Chapel Street have, in fact, been longstanding, and have been reported previously in *Transit*.

On 13th July a new service commenced, which saw trams resume services between St Kilda Beach and North Richmond, albeit after 6pm Mondays to Fridays, after midday Saturday, and all day Sunday.

This was such a novel event — namely that a tram service should run according to timetables posted at the tram stops — that notices proclaiming the "new" service were displayed in trams operating in Chapel Street.

CUTS IN STORE

Cuts being dreamed up (sorry, planned) for MetRail include:

★ Eliminating guards and station assistants. 300 guards could be made redundant, and 200 others would be retained as roving conductors on trains. The first guards are expected to be removed from the Sandringham line.

★ Tickets could be sold or checked on trains instead of at stations, reducing the need for station staff

★ Tickets could be sold at milk bars instead of at rail stations.

★ Vending machines on stations and trams could dispense tickets.

★ Some station buildings could be demolished, because they would then no longer be needed. A bus shelter could then be erected to keep out the rain.

The attitude of transport officials is appalling. One official said: "At the moment, all we're doing is providing the people of Melbourne with clean toilets at 220 rail stations. We don't provide the same at tram stops". — Yes, but you don't have to wait up to 40 minutes for a tram, like you do for a train. [Age 11, 20/7/87]

SECRET PLANS?

Further evidence that plans are afoot to rip out Route 12 tram line (in spite of categorical assurances by the Minister) is to be found in the curious turnout at the corner of William & Bourke Streets. We are informed that the turnout is to enable St Kilda LRVs access to South Melbourne Depot.

This ill-advised turnout in the busy city could have been avoided by installing minor adjustments to the out-bound overhead between Domain Road and Grey Street in St Kilda Road & Fitzroy Street. Alternatively, a turnout from Fitzroy Street St Kilda into Park Street would have enabled access to the depot.

Why was neither of these alternatives done? Because the link in Fitzroy Street between St Kilda Junction and Grey Street may not last too long (Route 15/16 discontinued?), and similarly for Route 12, which may well be the first tramline to bite the dust once the light rail service is operating.

St Kilda Road is the shortest route between the St Kilda terminus and South Melbourne Depot to begin in the mornings and to finish up in the evening. Route 10/12 would be a close second.

Even a south-bound turnout from South Melbourne Depot would have made better sense.

STOPPAGES

★ Trains stopped for up to 6 hours while unions discussed the Government's plans for the St Kilda & Port Melbourne lines. As a result, bans on construction sites on the lines were lifted. [Age 6/5/87]

★ The underground rail loop closed for two hours on 6/7/87 over a dispute about equipment at Moorabbin. The equipment in question is a set of automatic points at the start of the third express track. Guards wanted to play (sorry, operate) the points if the automatic equipment failed. (That would mean that the guard would have to walk from the rear of the train along ballast, to operate the points, and then walk back again before the train could proceed. Presumably, the driver twiddled his thumbs while this went on.) Incredible? Believe it or not. [Age 7/7/87]

★ 400 ETU members began a strike over the loss of two jobs at Preston tram depot, preventing maintenance on trams. The strike had no immediate effect, but a week later, trams began disappearing from the streets as they became defective and were not repaired. [Age 22/7/87]

★ A snap strike by train guards halted suburban and country services at 5.30 pm after two guards were disciplined in Geelong. V/LINE passengers were stranded in Geelong, Ballarat and Traralgon. Buses were brought in to move country passengers. Services started running again around 8.30 pm. [Age 18/7/87]

★ By the morning of 28/7, 60 trams and 12 buses were out of service because of the continuing dispute at Preston depot. By that afternoon, more than 85 trams were out of service. [Age 29/7]

★ By 29/7, the dispute had spread to trains, and one-third of trams were out of service. (155 trams and 15 buses were out of service; 485 trams are needed to operate evening peak services.)

★ At the end of 30/7, 40% of trains were working and 50% of trams were working.

★ On 31/7, no trains were operating on the Belgrave, Lilydale, Alamein and Glen Waverley lines. Saturday services were operating to a Saturday timetable on other lines (but trains were still operating on the St Kilda line!) Trains were to shut down from 10pm for the weekend, but a late-minute reprieve saw services continue that night and over the weekend.

★ On 1/8, only 30% of trams were serviceable.

★ On 2/8, only 30% of trams were serviceable.

★ On Monday 3/8, all tram services were cut out. [ABC Radio News 2/8] Only 28% of trams were serviceable. [Channel 9 News 2/9] Mr Roper said that trams would not run, in order to avoid overcrowding. [Do we hear loud guffaws?]

It seems it did not occur to out "astute" managers to pool the available trams onto lines that are not close to rail lines, such as Burwood and Bundoora, and to run the trams to the nearest rail station.

Train services operated to a Saturday timetable. Bus services were down by 30% [Herald 3/8]

More than 800 tram drivers and conductors were unable to do their usual work.

★ On Tuesday 4/8, a free tram shuttle service from Princes Park, Simpson Street and MCG operated with the expectation that motorists would park their cars there and take a tram. Amazingly, the frequency of these services (2½ minutes) was at least double the normal (non-strike) frequency, and most trams were running empty. [Age 4/8]. Princes Park was virtually empty of cars. [Age 5/8]

Trains operating to a Saturday timetable were disrupted while workers attended a stopwork meeting.

★ On Wednesday 5/8, trains, again operating a Saturday timetable, began to wind down from 8.10 am so that guards could attend a stopwork meeting.

Trams continued to run shuttle services from 7am to 7pm between car parks and the city

centre.

Trams began appearing in the streets in the afternoon, in time for the evening peak. Leaving his/her office at knock-off time, the commuter did a double take — was it all real? There had not been an inkling that services might resume.

Retail sales in the city were down by 60% because of the transport chaos. [ABC Radio News]

★ On Thursday 6/8, tram and train services were operating more like normal after the State Government capitulated to transport unions on plans to waste 1400 jobs, most of which were railway jobs. [Age, Herald]

According to the ABC Radio News, 40% of trams were running, and 90% of trains that morning.

★ On 26/8, Brunswick tram depot held a stopwork meeting over a wage claim. Services were affected from 12.30 pm for about three hours.

★ Bans were imposed on Friday 18 September on 15 trains. [Age 19/9]

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

NORTH-EASTERN

V/LINE is conducting a survey on public transport in Victoria's north-eastern region. The region includes the shires of Yarrawonga, Rutherglen, Chiltern, Tallangatta, Upper Murray, Benalla, Wangaratta, Beechworth, Yackandandah, Oxley, Myrtleford, Bright, Tungamah, Euroa and Violet Town, and the cities of Albury, Benalla, Wangaratta, and Wodonga.

The closing date for submissions was 10/7/87. [Age 27/5/87]

VICTORIA-WIDE

Submissions were invited on 21/8/87 from the public on 4 volumes of discussion papers released by the Transport Minister Mr Roper.

The papers outline five scenarios for the future development of V/LINE.

The closing date for submissions was 18 September.

Note that the papers were out of print. When finally delivered to this writer, there was only a week left to read the 4 volumes and to prepare the submission. Is the Minister really serious about user participation?

DANDENONG

The MTA is conducting a review of bus services in the Dandenong Neighborhood, which includes the cities of Dandenong, Springvale, Berwick, and the shires of Cranbourne and Pakenham.

Submissions closed on 26 June 1987.

OIL TO BECOME SCARCER

A CSIRO scientist, Dr A. Ekstrom, said that "rising crude oil prices may see Australia facing an annual bill of \$8.6 billion for imported oil by the end of the century".

Australia, now producing 80% of oil for the domestic market, would be producing only 50% by 1995. By the year 2000, Australia's production would have declined to 20% of domestic consumption, as supplies of the fuel ran out. [Age 27/8/87]

This ominous warning comes as V/LINE abandons its electrified country network and its electric locomotive fleet, and reverts to diesel haulage.

SPEED — THAT ELUSIVE COMMODITY

When it comes to speed, Victoria lags behind both NSW and Western Australia, despite introduction of new Victorian country trains. The reason for the inferiority of the Victorian fleet is the use of overweight locomotives and relatively poor condition of track. (The condition of track was covered in a recent issue.)

According to Colin Taylor writing in *Network* (July, Aug, Sept 1987), Victoria's fastest train ranks sixteenth in Australia's high speed league, barely scraping past 100 kph (62mph), well behind NSW and WA.

The Sydney express (ex Southern Aurora) makes its fastest run of 107kph (average)† — in NSW, and does not make 100 kph anywhere in Victoria, in spite of there being long stretches of straight track.

One might have expected that the fastest trains would all have been NSW's XPTs, but no! While the fastest Australian train is the Riverina XPT, putting in almost 130kph start-to-stop between Culcairn and Wagga Wagga, Westrail's *Prospector* puts in a close 126kph between Grass Valley and Meckering.

It is interesting to note that Victoria held the honours for the fastest average speed train in Australia, putting in 89.2 kph between Ararat and Hamilton, including stops. Victoria did not lose the honours to a superior train being introduced.

Believe it or not, VicRail forfeited the title by withdrawing the train! In 1981, the Ararat to Hamilton railcar (believed to be a DRC‡) was "upgraded" to a bus which runs the journey more than 20 kph slower. The title for the fastest train thus defaulted to the next-fastest train, the *Prospector*, at 84.7 kph.

(For comparison, the Riverina XPT makes the Sydney to Albury run at an average of 89.7kph, making it Australia's fastest train, but still only a whisker faster than the railcar.)

† In this article, *average* speed is used, also called start-to-stop time, not *maximum* speed. The average speed is a better estimate of a train's performance, because it is a measure of consistent performance.

‡ The Diesel Rail Car (DRC) fleet was refurbished and now operates the intercity services.

INTERSTATE NEWS

★ Bullet-proof glass is being installed in the cabins of locomotives operating the Sydney-Melbourne route because of a spate of rock-throwing at trains along the line. [Age 25/8/87]

★ The Overland — which the late Peter Evans of the ABC named "The Overdue" — was replaced by three buses from Adelaide on 4/8/87 because of a derailment of another train on the South Australian side.

On the 13th, the Overland was expected to be 2 hours late owing to a breakdown of a goods train in the Adelaide hills. [ABC Radio News 5/8, 13/8/87]

★ Double locks will be fitted to all external doors on V/LINE carriages. This follows a number of instances in which passengers have fallen to their deaths from the Melbourne/Sydney Expresses, and before that, the Southern Aurora.

The locks require operation by two hands, and it is considered safer than the single-handle locks because a disoriented passenger is less likely to mistake an external door for the interconnecting doors between carriages. [Age 7/8/87]

★ *V/LINE Re-introduces Change Trains At Border.* Has V/LINE shot itself in the foot? V/LINE has introduced a bus/rail route to Canberra — in competition with its own interstate rail service.

To get around the free interstate trade/transport between states, it runs the bus between Wodonga and Canberra (rather than from Albury to Canberra). Passengers take the train to Wodonga, change to a bus to cross the border, and arrive in Canberra after an 8¼-hour journey. [Age 10/8/87]

ROAD CRASHES

★ Road crashes in Australia are costing the community \$3,000 million each year, based on 1985 figures.

Each road fatality is costed at \$300,000. Each serious injury costs \$52,000. Fatalities and injuries cost \$881 million and \$1,497 million annually, respectively. Minor injuries and property damage add a further \$1,000 million a year. [Age 9/5/87]

NOW YOU SEE THEM, NOW YOU DON'T

Friday 31st July was the peak of the transport strike.

After the morning peak, the Government ordered a safety check on trams at Camberwell depot which is responsible for the East Burwood and Wattle Park tram services.

The check put *all* of the operating trams out of service (at least one of them for trivial problems, and it is suspected that the problems with the other trams were trivial also). None could be repaired because of the strike by maintenance workers.

Tram crews were mindful of their unwritten undertaking to take workers home again, and not to leave them stranded in the city.

The old depot at Hawthorn housed a number of W2-class pop-art trams awaiting disposal, a Y-class training tram, and vintage trams.

Camberwell depot took the W2-class trams out of mothballs, along with the other cars. They also rounded up drivers from other depots (because Camberwell depot operates mostly Z-class trams, and few drivers were experienced with the older class of trams).

Trams and drivers were pressed into service to provide the Friday evening peak on East Burwood and Wattle Park routes, as well as on the Saturday and Sunday.

A first-class effort Camberwell Depot.

FLINDERS STREET STATION TO BE SCRAPPED?

In a bid to cut down on vandalism and maintenance costs, MetRail is considering demolishing some railway stations. [Age 11/7/87]

What a marvellous idea! Can we expect that graffiti trains to be scrapped? Sometimes one wonders whether the real vandals are in MetRail and the Ministry

MONEY WASTED

The Government has wasted money on car rentals, according to the Opposition spokesman on transport, Mr Alan Brown.

In one case, it would have been cheaper to buy the car outright than to hire it for 23 months at a cost of \$19,000. In another instance, a car was rented for almost three years at a cost of \$16,000. [Age 22/8/87]

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 [redacted] for a new copy.

AUCTIONS (GOING CHEAP — ONE RAILWAY SYSTEM)

The National Party is attempting to discover the extent of state-owned assets being considered for sale. It has lodged Freedom of Information requests with all State Government departments.

Mr Peter Ross-Edwards, Leader of the Victorian National Party, said: “. . . the sale of assets to cover the *running costs* of the Government is not acceptable”. [our emphasis] [Age 24/8/87]

At present, the MTA and STA are disposing of assets — buildings, land, and rail reservations.

In a series of odious selloffs, the MTA is selling off land it leases out to shopowners, without giving the lessees first option to buy. We say the selloffs are odious because in a number of cases, the buildings and/or improvements on the land are *owned* by the lessees.

What the MTA's actions amount to is confiscation of the buildings which are then sold, along with the land, at a windfall profit. [Age 24/8]

There is no objection to the MTA obtaining a fair rent for the land, or a fair price a la Valuer-General, but the MTA has a moral — if not legal — obligation to give the lessee first refusal. This is standard practice.

One lessee is so infuriated that he is determined to knock down his buildings before the lease expires. [Age 26, 27/8]

One can't help wonder just why this reversal of policy. Once the land is sold, the revenue stops forever. Does this mean, for example, that the site of the Chinese restaurant at the newly-renovated Flinders Street station concourse will be sold from under the feet of its lessee who has poured thousands of dollars in fittings for the restaurant?

At Croydon, 15 properties were withdrawn from auction just prior to the sale, when the Government discovered it “owned” the lessee's improvements erected on it. [Age 26/8/87]

In the upper house, the leader Mr Chamberlain said that the Government had forced tenants to transfer ownership (of buildings on leased land) to the Government as a condition of having the leases extended. Such action appears to be reprehensible. [Age 20/8]

The STA sold 100 railway houses ranging in price from \$525 to \$55,000, and 25 blocks of land ranging from \$20 to \$52,000 per block. [Age 13/8]

The Government is selling “land it no longer wishes to use”. [Age 26/8] That phrase is clearly a euphemism to hide the fact that it is selling assets to pay its interest bills, as the Opposition claims. And it is doing it with great urgency because of its financial mess. Nine thousand lots of MTA and STA land are up for sale. [Age 26/8]

— R. Vowels

OVERDRAWN — OR BANKRUPT?

The SIO, STA and MTA are the three biggest loss-making enterprises in Australia, according to *Australian Business* magazine. [Age 6/6/87]

The MTA lost \$493 million last financial year. [Age 29/8]

Victoria's public debt is expected to exceed \$21 billion by the end of the financial year.

Debt-servicing costs (that is, interest payments) are expected to rise markedly over the next few years because of the transfer of previously capitalized transport debts to the state's current account. [Age 13/8]

The increasing charges are behind the Government's urgency to sell off land it currently is leasing out [see elsewhere in this issue]. It also explains the drive to understaff its public transport services (the recent transport strike escalated to a protest about the loss of 1411 more transport jobs [see elsewhere] and to cut out services.

(continued on page 25)

However, the Government is headed for "financial suicide" because of its policy of borrowing money and selling assets to pay interest on loans and wages, according to the Opposition. [Age 14/8/87]

At least \$310 million of Government's operating costs had been directed into its capital account, forcing the state to borrow more and more, according to Mr Alan Stockdale, Opposition spokesman on treasury matters. (ibid.)

— R. Vowels

AMUSEMENTS

★ On Friday 31st July at 2.50pm, at the peak of the strike when the number of trams still in service was about 30%, an articulated (double) tram was seen operating in La Trobe Street as Route 13. Few passengers use the service. So why wasn't the artic. used for the Burwood run where extra capacity was desperately needed?

★ At Flinders Street Station on 31st July, the signboard said that buses would operate the St Kilda service between 9.47am and 2.47am, owing to trackwork.

At 3.05pm, no train had yet arrived, and an announcement said that St Kilda trains had been "cancelled due to trackwork". (The sign was still on display.)

At 3.26pm, the bus arrived. It had no destination sign, and no-one knew where it was going.)

It never occurred to MetRail to advise passengers to catch a Collins Street tram to take them to their destination — as far as MetRail is concerned, trams just don't exist.

★ Seen in Elizabeth Street: On Friday 31st July, without sufficient trams available to operate normal services, Essendon Depot sent out at least one tram with two drivers and two conductors. (Tram No. 95, route 59, 2.57pm)

STOP PRESS

★ In a bid to reduce operating costs, the Government will introduce diesel trams on all routes after 7pm, and at weekends. The move will allow the electric overhead to be switched off. About 50 electric trams will be refitted with diesel motors.

★ The recently-opened Bundoora tram line will be cut back to East Preston, as patronage has not been up to expectations.

★ The Webb Dock goods railway, constructed a few years ago at a cost of \$20 million, is to be scrapped. The ailing railway was black banned for the first nine months of its life, and now sees only one train per day.

★ The Hume Freeway between Coolaroo and Wodonga will be closed and dismantled, as cost recovery has fallen below acceptable limits. The Government's aim was to obtain 50% cost recovery for passenger routes and 100% for freight routes.

Contracts have already been let for recovery of the bitumen, and for the steel and concrete used in bridges.

VANDALS RAMPANT

We grumble about the graffiti and other vandalization which is ruining our trains, and the cost (some \$4 million annually for the graffiti alone). But who are the *real* vandals?

We tend to overlook those vandals who are bent on destroying the public transport from within — namely those who are responsible for managing it.

The \$25 million being expended in vandalizing the St Kilda and Port Melbourne rail lines, the closure of the Orbost line, and the conversion of the Gippsland line from electric to diesel, are recent instances.

RICHMOND TRAIN INDICATOR BOARDS OUT OF ORDER SIX YEARS

Following publicity highlighting the \$10 million train indicator boards at Richmond station being out of order since 1981, the MTA reconnected the system on 2/3/87.

However, my monitoring over three consecutive days indicates that the defects that we highlighted in 1981 still exist.

The information displayed is still incorrect and misleading.

Because over \$10 million has been spent, it is imperative that private sector expertise be called in to make the boards function, as it is obvious that the MTA lacks the experience and knowledge to do it themselves.

The MTA is also to be condemned for re-connecting the boards without correcting the defects, just to counter media and public criticism.

— Ken McIntyre

Instances of discrepancies are tabled below:

Date: 16 March 1987.

At 7.49am, the next train was scheduled to depart for Flinders Street direct, from platform 3 in 8 minutes. It actually arrived at platform 7 in 2 minutes.

At 7.51am, the next train direct to Flinders Street was scheduled to leave from platform 7 in 8 minutes; it arrived on platform 3 in 3 minutes. [probably the train scheduled as noted at 7.49 above—Ed.]

The next loop train was due to depart platform 8 in 4 minutes; it actually arrived on platform 3 in 6 minutes.

There was an announcement on the P.A. system that the next loop train on platform 5 was due at 7.57; the Board showed platform 8, and the train arrived at platform 3 at 8.01am.

17th March 1987.

At 8.03am, the boards showed that the next Flinders Street train was due at platform 7 in 8 minutes; it arrived in 3 minutes; the next Dandenong train was due in 10 minutes; it arrived in 4 minutes.

At 8.07am, the boards showed the next Flinders Street train as leaving in 8 minutes; two trains arrived in 3 and 5 minutes. It was announced on the P.A. system that the next Flinders Street would leave platform 5. It came in on platform 7.

At 8.13am, the next loop train was due on platform 8; it arrived on platform 3.

18th March 1987.

At 7.56am, the next Flinders Street train was due on platform 7 in 8 minutes. A P.A. announcement said that the next train would be at platform 5. The next loop train was due at platform 8. The P.A. announcement changed this to platform 5.

At 8.03am, the boards displayed the information that the next Flinders Street train would arrive on platform 8 in 8 minutes. In fact, three trains arrived— one at 8.04, 8.07, and 8.09 — but all on platform 7. At 8.06am, a P.A. announcement stated platform 7, while the boards still displayed platform 8.

At 8.10am, the display on the boards was that the next Flinders Street train would leave platform 8 in 8 minutes. The P.A. announcement changed this to platform 2.

The next loop train was due at platform 8 in 2 minutes. A P.A. announcement changed that to Platform 1 (it arrived at 8.11), the next on platform 5 (it arrived at 8.12)

On this day, the boards were not functioning on platforms 1 and 2. The display for the 'second train scheduled' was not functioning on all platforms.

[illegible]

**The Annual General Meeting of the Public Transport Users' Association
will be held on
Wednesday 28th October 1987
at the Raymond Priestly Room (first floor) of Union House,
Tin Alley, Melbourne University
at 6.00 pm**

