

TRAIN TRAVELLERS' ASSOCIATION



Newsletter

June 1981

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Annual General Meeting

This issue of the Newsletter is being published a few weeks earlier than normal in order to provide sufficient notice to Members concerning the A.G.M. which is being held

on Thursday 18th June, 1981
commencing at 5:30 p.m.
in the Jacaranda Room
at The Victoria Hotel,
215 Little Collins Street,
Melbourne.

A separate Notice of Meeting is enclosed with this Newsletter. Nominations for the election of Office bearers and Council members are invited.

Renewal of Subscriptions

It is also proposed at the A.G.M. to introduce an amendment to the Constitution to provide more flexibility in the timing of subscription renewals. The proposed amendment is set out in detail

in this Newsletter on page 7.

Some subscriptions will be falling due for renewal soon and Members might find it convenient to make payment at the A.G.M.. The due date for renewals according to our records is shown on the first line of your address label, and when payment is made membership will be extended for a further 12 months from the due date.

There has been a good response to the introduction of the Donor Membership category approved at last year's A.G.M. and this together with substantial donations to our Emergency Appeal and Publicity Campaign Funds has greatly improved the financial position of the TTA and enabled us to expand our activities. It is hoped that Members will maintain their generous support in this way.

DOES THE RACV HAVE PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN PERSPECTIVE?

It is almost five years since the Train Travellers' Association began its struggle on behalf of Victoria's embattled commuters and, whilst success in terms of achieving major improvement in the State's rail passenger service is still to be attained, there is evidence that our campaign is hitting home in other areas.

For many years the RACV/CRB lobby has pushed for greater spending on highways and freeways - spending which has been undertaken at the expense of public transport. This has resulted in passengers deserting the public transport system in their thousands and adding to an ever increasing vehicle population on roads and freeways, often provided years ahead of their need.

It was rather amusing therefore to read in the March issue of "Royalauto", the RACV monthly journal, the attempts by the RACV's Manager, Traffic and Safety, to climb on the Public Transport bandwagon with claims that the bulk of "public" transport is provided by private cars. In many other ways the article is remarkable for what it does not say and the way it uses selected statistical data in isolation to support its case.

The article downgrades public transport's role in order to argue for further cuts. In fact, not only 70-83% of work trips to the City are by public transport, but also one-third of all work trips in the entire Melbourne area are by public transport. Indeed, according to the 1978 Transport Study, nearly one-quarter of all trips for all purposes throughout all Melbourne were by public transport.

These trips not only reduce pollution and save liquid fuel for motorists, they also reduce traffic congestion. A small increase in public transport usage would solve virtually all our traffic problems. So cuts in the system are not in the interest of motorists.

They are also against the interests of all Victorians. Cars do not provide public transport. One-sixth of all Victorian households have no car; even within those that do, children, wives, and older people are often without the family car or cannot drive it. Moreover, only public transport moves numbers of people without road congestion or parking problems; one tram at peak-hour is often doing the work of 100-150 cars.

Buses may be useful additions to the public transport network, but they cannot substitute for trams (let alone for trains). A bus must pass people waiting at the stop when it reaches 50-60 persons on board; a tram can hold 150. A bus is caught up in traffic. It cannot cater for prams and shopping jeeps. And a bus uses liquid fuel, while the tram uses electricity. Cost comparisons must take into account the tram's working life of 40 years as against 10 years for a bus; on this basis the cost is roughly comparable, and the cost per passenger is less for the tram.

One of the major omissions is the relative cost of transportation by public and private transport. The RACV has recently published figures indicating that the cost of running the average family car is 28 cents per kilometre, but when this is compared with public transport costs of

between 2.3 ¢/km from the city to outer suburbs and 6 ¢/km to inner suburbs, it is obvious that resources are being mis-directed towards the construction of roads and freeways. This question of the direction of resources is also largely ignored by the RACV article. This is not surprising when it is considered that the strong RACV/CRB lobby has been largely responsible for the misdirection at the expense of public transport. As a result of course, travellers have been encouraged to use uneconomical private transport often on roads and freeways provided ahead of need, whilst the drop in public transport usage has been used to justify lower investment in capital works and declining service standards.

Considerable play is made in the article on the decline in patronage of public transport together with the increase in journeys by car. However the fact that many car journeys are quite short (often to the nearest railway station) while the length of the average journey by public transport has increased threefold during the same period in which the number of journeys has fallen 75%, was apparently not considered worthy of comment. What this means of course is that the increase in car ownership has had little effect on the total demand for public transport during this period. The use of the statistics in this instance is misleading, as is the quoted cost comparison of trams and buses. The carrying capacity differential of the two types of vehicle is ignored as also is the vastly different cost structure surrounding depreciation and maintenance.

The problem of public transport is not the "deficit", it is that so much is spent on operating an antiquated system

and so little on capital expenditures to make the system more efficient.

The RACV, whilst it represents the motorist, demonstrates in the article an almost compelling desire to convince readers that only people in the Central Business District who are forced to use public transport do so and that their requirements should be met with a service providing nothing but essential needs. This ignores the situation that door-to-door private car transport is not always possible or desirable and that 50% of the population do not possess a driving licence.

The RACV's attack on the public transport system appears to centre on the desire to obtain more funds for roads and the article dwells heavily on the subsidy question but virtually ignores the point that the \$54 million per annum proposed expenditure on public transport improvements is relatively modest compared to the total costs of roads and services provided for private transport, e.g. road development, maintenance, vehicle operation, accidents, police services, etc.. It is obvious that the user is paying very dearly for private transport when we see that the \$1000 million overall deficit on public transport in the last decade, quoted in the article, represents about \$1000 per household compared with \$15000-\$30000 to own and operate a private car during the same period.

Every kilometre of new or improved road or freeway encourages people to possess more cars; every extra car represents another potential subscription to the RACV which thereby grows in financial strength and numbers and its management and officers also.

ITEMS FROM OUR COMPLAINT FILES

CASE "A"

Off-Peak Rail Ticket Injustice

Nowhere on the Off-Peak rail tickets are the rules and regulations governing the use of the tickets printed. Such tickets are available for travel by trains, for example, which are scheduled to arrive in the City at or after 9:30 a.m. or leave the City before 4 p.m. or after 6 p.m.

When the last train scheduled to leave the City before 4 p.m. is cancelled passengers holding such tickets are forced to travel by a train after 4 p.m. These passengers complain that ticket checkers and rail staff at the destination station charge them the excess fare. The situation as to whether the last train ex Melbourne has been cancelled can be verified by the rail staff from Train Control. Despite the injustice, passengers are loathe to submit formal complaints and claim the refund of the amount involved.

A colleague of the Editor of the Sunday Press was involved in one such incident and, instead of checking his claim that the last train before 4 p.m. was cancelled, the ticket checking staff not only made him pay the excess fare but misbehaved and abused him.

We followed up this report with the Transport Minister who agreed that it was an injustice to make passengers pay the excess fare, and that concessional travel by the next available train should be permitted in such circumstances.

These cases highlight the obvious facts:

- (i) that the rail staff are not aware of VicRail rules and regulations

- (ii) the ticket checker's inefficiency and contempt for customer relations by not verifying the passenger's claim that the last train before 4 p.m. was cancelled or late.
- (iii) that rail managers and supervisors are not checking to ensure that their staff are conversant with the rules, or observing them.

CASE "B"

The Locker Room Lockout

On the evening of Friday 13/2/1981 I received a complaint from passengers at Flinders Street Station concerning non-availability of luggage lockers. When I went to the station at 5:30 p.m. I found 37 out of the 80 lockers in the main locker room out of commission (46%) with the locks damaged or missing. Many passengers were unaware of the existence of other lockers on Platform No.1 or in the Lost Property Office.

I complained verbally and in writing to the VicRail Chairman, Mr. Reiher, requesting action on repairing the damaged lockers and provision of a notice advising passengers of the location of alternative lockers at Flinders Street.

At 7:45 a.m. on 4/3/1981 I checked the situation and found the main locker area in Flinders Street Station closed and a notice advising people to use the lockers on Pf 1 and the cloakroom 60 metres away. I went to the cloakroom only to find that 50% of the lockers there were out of

commission. When I told the rail staff on duty that I was directed by the notice at the main locker room to go there, the response from them was, and I quote - "Which bloody idiot put up that notice when everyone knows half these lockers are out of order."

The main locker room is still closed. It is evident from this incident that either:

- (i) the rail managers were not aware of the damaged lockers till the complaint, or
- (ii) knew about the situation and failed to have them repaired and regularly checked.

Either situation speaks volumes for the inefficiency and disdain for their customers shown by closing the main locker room for such a lengthy period. Again the rail managers are following their predicted pattern of running down services in the hope passengers will stop using them:

- (a) by denying passengers the use of facilities,
- (b) by the loss of revenue that can be obtained from the use of the facilities.

CASE "C"

Train Notice Boards

Since the inception of the TTA we have frequently submitted written and oral suggestions to the rail managers to provide notice boards at stations to convey current and timely information to passengers about train cancellations, late running, etc. Especially at stations not provided with a public address system, passengers have no means of knowing about the late running of trains. Even today, not many stations exhibit such a notice board.

Station Masters and other station staff complain that Train Control does not keep them informed of cancellations and late running. A classic example occurred at Caulfield in July 1980 when the leader of the National Party, Mr. Ross-Edwards, travelled the trains with us. Both the Train Control - for not informing station staff, and Station Masters/Assistants - for not making inquiries about train cancellations/late running, are responsible for failing to serve their customers.

Timely information about late running/cancellations will benefit passengers, especially at stations where alternative means of transport, such as trains on other routes or buses, are available to take them to work or home with less delay.

CASE "D"

Rail Staff Misconduct

A lady passenger had her weekly ticket wrongly dated with the previous week's date. When detected by the ticket checking staff, instead of verifying the evidence she produced, or confirming it with the station concerned, they instead abused and called her "a dumb broad", "a liar", etc. and made her pay another fare. The complaint is still under investigation.

From incidents such as these few cases from our complaints file, there is ample evidence that neither the rail managers nor staff are interested in providing users with efficient services. Like the government they seem hell bent in running down the services and driving customers away from them.

- Ken McIntyre

Hon. Secretary

Government Hides Facts on Public Transport

The State Government repeatedly claims that its policy is to seek community views on transport issues.

Not only does it fail to consult or seek community views, but it refuses the community access to the documentation and study reports on which transport decisions are made.

For example, the Government has refused to make public the running costs, revenue earned and patronage figures of any of the rail or tram lines recommended for closure in the Lonie reports.

Readers will recall that since 1978 we have raised with the government the failure of the rail management to publish even basic operational statistics in their annual reports. All we got from the Premier was a "promise" that a new system is to be introduced. Like all his other promises on public transport, we are still waiting for "Hamer to make it happen".

As taxpayers and proprietors of the State public transport systems we have a right to details of the performance of these systems.

The government has used taxpayers' money to finance studies and surveys into public transport. Where the findings and reports are contrary to their pro-car transport policies they hide such reports from the public. Compare the haste with which the pro-car "Looney" report was pushed through for implementation, to some other reports which are yet to be released.

A short list of some of these reports denied to the public are the: -

- . survey information on travel patterns which formed part of the Ministry of Transport 1978 Transport Plan;
- . Transmark reports (the complete version);
- . report prepared by P. G. Pak-Poy and Associates Pty. Ltd;
- . VicRail submissions to the Victorian Transport study;
- . capital works programme for the next 5 years for VicRail and the Tramways Board;
- . Bus network planning guidelines 1978;
- . feasibility study by the Tramways Board on the introduction of trolley buses.

Questions on Notice raised by M.P.s in the State Parliament on matters relating to public transport are usually not answered or are given perfunctory replies that are useless. We often request M.P.s to raise such Questions to elicit information on our behalf. We wait months for the Minister to reply, and some questions are never answered.

The Shadow Minister for Transport, Mr. Steve Crabb, called on the Transport Minister in Parliament on 9/4/81 to make public all the information, reports etc. available to the government on public transport. To date the Minister has not released the information on these reports. In many cases the Statutory authorities are prepared to supply the information provided the Minister agreed to release it. This is yet another example of the Transport Minister treating the public with contemptuous arrogance.

Is not the long-suffering public entitled to better than this?

- Ken McIntyre

CHANGE OF CONSTITUTION - NOTICE OF MOTION AT A.G.M.

It is proposed that at the annual general meeting a motion be put to replace Sections 4 and 6 of the existing constitution with the words proposed below so that:

- a) Memberships can be accepted from interstate and/or overseas;
- b) Corporate memberships as proposed at last year's AGM have a constitutional basis;
- c) Members who join late in the year can be assured of receiving a full year's membership for their subscription without the treasurer having to negotiate pro-rata subscriptions; and
- d) The treasurer's work load can be spread over the year. (With a membership around 1000, this work load has become considerable.)

Existing constitution Sections

4. MEMBERSHIP

(a) Membership of the TTA shall be open to any resident of Victoria, upon payment of such subscription as the Council of the TTA shall from time to time determine.

(b) The TTA shall have the right to appoint patrons and Life members according to such conditions as it shall determine.

6. SUBSCRIPTION

The subscription of all members shall become due on the first of April each year, and a member whose subscription is not paid by the beginning of the next following annual general meeting shall cease to be a member. The Council may determine reduced subscriptions to apply during the first year of membership of new members who join late in the year.

Proposed new Sections

4. MEMBERSHIP

(a) Membership of the TTA shall be open to any person upon payment of such subscription as the Council of the TTA shall from time to time determine.

(b) Corporate membership of the TTA shall be open to any association or incorporated body, upon payment of such corporate membership subscription as the Council of the TTA shall from time to time determine. The representative of an association or body which holds corporate membership shall have the same voting right as an ordinary member.

(c) The TTA shall have the right to appoint patrons and Life members according to such conditions as it shall determine.

6. SUBSCRIPTION

(a) The subscription of all members shall become due on the first of April each year, and a member whose subscription is not paid by the beginning of the next following annual general meeting shall cease to be a member, unless the Council of the TTA extend the period of membership as provided in the next Sub-Section.

(b) The Council of the TTA may for each year, determine that the period of membership of all members be extended to the appropriate anniversary of the date on which each member's initial subscription was received. The Council may determine reduced subscriptions for new members who join late in the year to apply during the first year of their membership.

(AN ARTICLE FROM THE NEWSLETTER OF OUR SISTER ORGANISATION IN THE USA. WHEN WILL WE BE ABLE TO REPORT SOME GOOD NEWS?)

AMTRAK COMES OF AGE

It used to be that travelling by train in the United States required, in addition to a ticket, a good deal of stamina and courage. Railroad passengers had to be prepared for all kinds of adversity: hours-late trains, stranded trains, dining car fires, heating and air conditioning failures, filthy accommodation et al. Indeed, the railroad traveller was a second-class citizen.

But, alas, that bleak era is coming to an end. A new and better day is dawning for rail travel in the U.S., thanks to years of persistence and dedication on the part of many people - citizens who voiced outrage over lousy trains, journalists who amplified those cries, members of Congress who faithfully responded with necessary legislation (in the face of constant opposition from the Executive Branch), and men and women of Amtrak who worked to make their company succeed despite great obstacles.

During the 1970s, Amtrak made substantial progress in many areas, such as schedule coordination, train cleanliness, personnel behaviour/morale, and information/reservation matters. Now, Amtrak is overcoming its critical equipment problems.

Equipment Modernization

When Amtrak began operations in 1971, virtually all of its trains except NY-Washington Metroliners employed temperamental steam-heated passenger cars inherited from the private railroads. Suffering from neglect, these steam cars proved unreliable

and expensive to maintain; yet they remained Amtrak's primary type of equipment on long-distance trains until 1980.

As of Jan. 31, 1981, all but three Amtrak trains were operating with new or rebuilt electric-powered equipment, featuring reliable heating, cooling, and lighting. Amtrak's trains will consist entirely of dependable, head-end electric passenger cars before autumn. No more steam!

That's a significant accomplishment, and one which is already paying large dividends, including: reduced car maintenance costs, fewer mechanical failures - and thus greater passenger comfort, higher crew morale, better on-time performance, improved relations with contracting railroads, and increased ridership, revenue, and cost-recovery. Moreover, it will enhance Amtrak's energy efficiency, since the replacement equipment is lighter per revenue space.

Ridership Up

Despite the recession and the abundance of gasoline for autos, Amtrak ridership in FY 80 was up 3.4% over FY '79 (excluding trains discontinued at the end of FY '79, for accurate comparison). Amtrak had feared a ridership decline because it only expected to retain 25% of the ridership induced by 1979's gas shortage. Scott Hercik, Michigan DOT's rail passenger manager, admits that he too had expected train usage to fall once gasoline became plentiful again. But he says the ridership growth in FY '80 indicates to him that people who changed their travel

Amtrak Is Succeeding

Amtrak boasts: "We're making the trains worth travelling again," and that has never been more evident. Despite difficult odds and many antagonists, Amtrak is succeeding. We doubt that even Reagan's budget cutters will be able to stop this, because Amtrak's product, rail passenger transportation, is intrinsically sound and increasingly essential. John A. Volpe, the Republican Transportation Secretary who presided over Amtrak's birth, said it all two years ago when he wrote to Rep. James Florio (D-NJ):

"I have long been convinced that the passenger train has inherent characteristics as the most efficient mover of large numbers of people. It is by far the safest mode of travel. Our friends abroad in every industrialized nation can't all be wrong. They are far ahead of us in developing new passenger train systems to meet growing demand and to offer their citizens an alternative to higher fuel costs and shortages....

"As I said in 1971, 'Amtrak is a beginning and the base upon which to build.' It is time, right now, to build our nationwide rail passenger system, not let it be destroyed."

- Barry Williams (N.A.R.P.)

habits during the 1979 gas shortage have become permanent train riders. With improved trains and service, "we feel fairly confident now that once we've got them (on trains) we will keep them."

All Amtrak trains which received new or rebuilt cars in FY '80 showed healthy ridership gains: the "Lake Shore" up 8.4%, the "Broadway" up 13.2%, and the "Empire Builder" up 37.4%.

Better Cost Recovery

The percentage of Amtrak operating costs covered by commercial revenues - primarily from passenger and package express transportation - rose from 38.3% in FY '78 to 41.1% in FY '80, a more respectable showing than many urban transit systems make. *

Driven by inflation, Amtrak's deficit in actual dollars has increased annually. But, in terms of constant dollars (dollars adjusted to remove the inflation factor), Amtrak's deficit actually declined after FY '76 for three successive years. And although the FY '80 deficit was 1% above that of Energy Crisis FY '79, it was lower than that posted in either FY '77 or '78. **

* But compare VicRail's better performance: 49%!

** In real terms VicRail "deficit" was down 26% from 1974/75 to 1979/80 ('Age' 13/3/81).

CARGO CULT MENTALITY?

"Railway systems all around the world are going through a great period of adjustment, and in Victoria this period is made more difficult because of the lack of bulk minerals traffic in the State".

- Mr. N. Rashleigh, retiring Assistant General Manager, Finance and Administration ("VicRail News", April 1981)

INTERNATIONAL RAIL NEWS

Canada

In February 1981 the Quebec and Montreal Urban Community (MUC) approved an estimated \$900 million plan to integrate suburban commuter trains with bus and METRO services in Montreal.

The plan means that passengers may use one monthly pass or pay one fare to use Canadian National (CN) and Canadian Pacific (CP) commuter trains as well as buses and the METRO.

The new commuter pass would cost from \$17 to about \$35 per month depending on how far the user lives from the city.

It is officially estimated that patronage on two of the lines alone (West Island and Rigaud) would triple from 16000 passengers daily to over 46000.

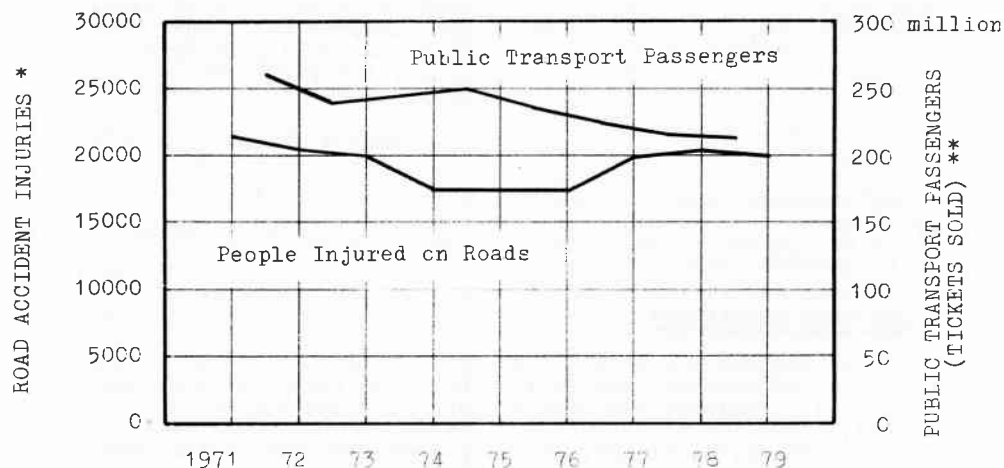
The complete integrated network is expected to be completed in sections within the next 5 to 6 years.

The TTA has continually advocated that the Victorian government introduce a simplified, moderately priced, all modes ticket system for travel on any route by train, tram or bus and for daily, weekly, monthly, etc. use. This would attract greater patronage and provide easy modal interchange and travel convenience.

Despite election undertakings to introduce this facility it remains as yet another of the empty promises of Mr. Hamer's Great Transport Revolution!

PUBLIC TRANSPORT CUTS & ROAD INJURIES

Research done recently by the Northern Suburbs Public Transport Action Group shows a correlation between declining public transport usage and increasing road injuries.



A drop of 36.6 million tickets sold annually for public transport between 1974/75 and 1978/79 (a 15% drop) was accompanied by 2838 more people injured on roads in Victoria in 1978 than in 1974 (a 16% rise).

If the proposed closing of the Altona, Port Melbourne, Williamstown and Upfield lines goes ahead, more than 19,000 people will be forced to seek alternative transport each weekday. ***

SOURCES: * A.B.S. "Road Traffic Accidents Involving Casualties".
** TTA Newsletter Sep. '80, page 18.
*** Protect the St. Kilda Line Committee leaflet.

- Margaret Panter

UNDERGROUND RAIL LOOP- The Cost Grows -

At last, some three months after the proposed "official" opening, eight months after the Queen officially opened the then incomplete Museum Plaza, and some two years later than expected, the first stage of the Underground rail loop is operating.

The cost? Already some \$417m (AGE 22/1/81) and likely to rise by \$120m as Museum, Parliament and Flagstaff Stations, additional loop lines etc. are completed by 1983 (AGE 23/1/81). MURLA has borrowed \$300m over the past ten years and is presently borrowing at the rate of \$60m per annum. The final cost, including interest on loans to be repaid over the next forty years, is expected to be a phenomenal \$1600m (AGE 24/1/81).

But will that really be the final cost? In the greatest bungle yet, an error was made in the plans for the "super silver" trains which are expected to be running through the underground system. These trains, built to replace the red rattlers which are unsafe

The threatened scrapping of Sunday and weeknight services is particularly disturbing when road toll figures for these times are considered. Sunday is the third worst day for road injuries in Victoria and the second worst day for road deaths. 6 - 8 p.m. is the worst time of day for road deaths, and 8 - 10 p.m. and 10 p.m. - 12 midnight are equal third worst. *

in the Underground, are 7½cm wider than existing silver trains. They cannot be used on sixteen of the nineteen metropolitan lines for fear of side-swiping trains on adjacent tracks. A massive track relocation for the metropolitan system, commenced over eighteen months ago (AGE 3/4/81), must add millions of dollars to costs without benefitting or improving the service.

How should these escalating costs be viewed in the light of decreasing rail patronage (85.3m passengers last year - an all-time low, and a decrease of 5.3% over the previous year) and the proposed closure of five suburban rail lines, a closure that would lose another 8.4m rail passengers a year?

As the loop costs cannot be decreased the obvious step is a positive campaign to promote the use of the rail system through improvements, rather than threats of closures and cuts in services. Otherwise we might have just a \$1600m white elephant on our hands!

--Robin Vowels

BOOK REVIEW :

MELBOURNE'S DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING by Clive S. Beed

This book is a must for all supporters of public transport. It is a superb deposit of facts and arguments you will need when countering the claims of the road lobby. It is not perfect (I'll mention some problems later), but it is by far the best tool available at present and it has two special advantages: it is about Melbourne specifically and it is very up-to-date (it even includes three pages on the Lonie report!). It deserves a place on the bookshelf of every person interested in a balanced transport system and a liveable city, next to three other essential books:

J. Michael Thompson,
Great Cities and Their Traffic
(Peregrine-Penguin, 1978);

Conservation Council Victoria,
Seeds for Change
(Patchwork Press, 1978);

and Barry Commoner,
The Poverty of Power
(Knopf, 1976).

Dr. Beed, who is Chairman of the Department of Regional and Urban Economic Studies at the University of Melbourne, relates transport as a whole to the problems of land use and the structure of the city. He has a particular case in mind. He believes--and argues effectively--that consumer choices are skewed by the cultural, economic, and especially governmental support given to the suburban environment; this in turn leads to over-dependence on private transport and makes public transport less efficient. A vicious circle is thus created in which suburbanisation and the motor car feed on each other, making public transport less viable, increasing social problems and

problems of the environment, such as pollution, and running up an immense bill to the taxpayer through the largely hidden subsidies to private transport, the cost of road accidents, and the increasing social inequality as mobility is reduced in the face of the energy crisis.

Most readers will probably be convinced of Dr. Beed's basic argument. It seems clear that alternatives to suburban isolation and total dependence on the motor car are increasingly sought after and that the market cannot provide for them effectively. So Dr. Beed suggests that alternatives be catered for. He calls for the creation of medium density cluster dwelling and town houses near major public transport nodes, encouragement to industry to locate near such nodes or in the City, and strengthening the inner suburbs as higher density living areas. He would seem to approve of the basic thrust of the MMBW's new plan ("Amendment 150"), although he might think it still fell short of what was needed and contradicted itself by its emphasis on freeways and on development of boulevards like St. Kilda Rd.

Dr. Beed's book highlights the absurdities of planning arrangements in Melbourne. The Melbourne City Council has just been sacked, allegedly for failure to introduce the 1974 Strategy Plan, which the State Government planning agency (the MMBW) has opposed since 1974. Now that the Council has been sacked, the MMBW has come out in favour of a plan which includes some aspects of the 1974 plan and the Ministry of Transport, under the direction of its

energetic Minister and with the support of the Premier, plans to start winding down public transport, at the very moment when the MMBW seeks to emphasise public transport!

So far, so good. But I have extrapolated the thrust of Dr. Beed's argument from the book and constructed it in almost the reverse order from that which he uses. He starts with transport. Then, in order to prove that changes in land use are the only long-term policy which will reduce the heavily subsidised motor car transport system, prevent pollution, save energy, and reduce social inequality, he argues that public transport can do little to attract patronage without land-use changes. Here, I think, he falls unwittingly into the trap set by Mr. Maclellan and the motor lobby.

Despite a sound critique of the Lonie report, Dr. Beed himself passes over the positive contribution to an improved urban environment which can be made through improving public transport. Not that he ignores the benefits of public transport. On the contrary, he argues that only through a shift to public transport can we reduce costs to the community, reduce pollution and the road toll, improve mobility, maintain an attractive environment and cope with fuel shortages. But he is so intent on arguing that the shift to public transport can come about only through long-term land use policies that he passes over the ways that transport policy can also affect land use in the short to medium term. Indeed, he paints a hopeless short-term picture in order, I think, to emphasise his long-term goals.

He argues, for example, that price cuts do not increase ridership so much as they reduce income. But he neglects the role that coherent fares and simplified ticketing can play in the medium term, in conjunction with other factors. For example, he cites Sydney's reduction of fares in 1976 and points out that in 1977 patronage rose by only 3%. He then suggests that such reductions will only yield a 1% increase, which is considerably less than what was achieved in Sydney. But more importantly, he overlooks the degree to which the Sydney fare cuts, during a five year period, did make a substantial contribution to an important increase in patronage: 40 million more! The benefits come slowly, as a result of a general improvement of the system, of which reduced fares or even just simplified fares can be an important part. Sydney rail patronage rose 14.5% during the last year on record (1978/79-1979/80), which suggests that the benefits continue to flow long after the turnaround. Similarly, in Paris in 1975, following the introduction of a monthly subscription ticket by zones, giving unlimited all-modes travel for a sum based on the price of the old weekly commutation ticket, bus trips rose by 50% in six months and public transport use overall continues to rise at a faster rate of increase than previously.

Similarly, Dr. Beed discounts the 9% increase in patronage in one year (1974-75) on the Glen Waverley line, following fairly minor upgrading of the line and the use of all blue and silver trains. This is probably due to his dependency on studies by urban

consultants, heavily dependent in their turn on government and the motor industry. This leads to another criticism of the book. It goes into the fight in a very gentlemanly way, while the opponents are hitting below the belt. This is very much an academic study and Dr. Beed is reluctant to formulate his conclusions quite so forcefully as I would like.

A good example of this is in his excellent analysis of the hidden subsidy to private transport. He cites studies which show that car users pay significantly less of the capital and operating costs on their transport network than bus and train users, and points out that this "highlights a powerful institutional bias steering consumer choice to the private

car." But he does not emphasise this point further and he neglects to take it into account when he discusses problems of patronage on public and private transport.

These are, however, relatively minor criticisms. We train and tram travellers might wish that Dr. Beed had consulted us as well as the studies produced by government consultants; we might wish that he had looked at how the bicycle and minibus systems can increase train catchment areas; but we will all enjoy this excellent book and we will find stimulating, soundly based arguments and a wealth of facts to use as we struggle to preserve Melbourne as a decent city for our children.

--Charles Sowerwine

Clive S. Beed, Melbourne's Development and Planning.

Parkville: Clewara Press, 1981. ISBN 0 9594166 0 9.

Available from Clewara Press, P.O. Box 182, Parkville 3052

Price: \$15 plus \$1.30 postage.

FORUM ON LOCAL PLANNING FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION

A series of Forums on local planning for energy conservation will be held in most capital cities in Australia in June 1981.

The aim of these Forums is to facilitate discussion and action on energy conservation at the local government level. The Forums are being arranged by a private group of academics and others in association with local government organisations.

Melbourne date: 10 June 1981, time: 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Venue: Masonic Centre, Dallas Brookes Hall, East Melbourne.

Standard fee: \$ 50

Reduced fee if registered before 22/5/81: \$ 40

Students/Pensioners concession fee: \$ 10

Guest speaker will be American writer and commentator James Ridgeway. Mr. Ridgeway is the founder of the Public Resources Centre in Washington D.C. and author of several books on energy issues; his latest book is titled "Energy-Efficient Community Planning".

For further information please contact Mr. D. Crossley, telephone [redacted].

Contributions to TTA Publicity Campaign Fund:

In addition to the donations to this fund which were acknowledged in our March 1981 Newsletter, we are most grateful for the following contributions received since.

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------|
| A. R. Payne | \$25 |
| J. Wong | \$20 |
| O. Archibald | \$10 |
| A. L. Grigg | \$70 |
| L. Moore | \$10 |
| P. J. Smith | \$20 |
| Shire of Tallangatta | \$50 |
| F. Wositzky | \$5 |
| City of Fitzroy | \$100 |
| City of South Melbourne | \$100 |
| Shire of Healesville | \$100 |
| Shire of Lillydale | \$500 |
| City of Box Hill | \$50 |
| City of Essendon | \$50 |
| Victorian Teachers' Union | \$50 |
| City of Port Melbourne | \$500 |
| City of Melbourne | \$1000 |
| City of Northcote | \$50 |
| Shire of Swan Hill | \$50 |
| Richmond Community Chest | \$100 |
| Combined Pensioners' Association | \$25 |
| City of St. Kilda | \$150 |
| Malvern City Council | \$100 |
| City of Sandringham | \$200 |
| City of Oakleigh | \$50 |

Including donations received earlier these amount to a grand total of \$3765.

Major items of expenditure in the publicity campaign were

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Printing of 50000 leaflets | \$380.00 |
| Newspaper advertisements (3 in "The Age" & 1 in "The Sun") | \$2838.64 |

Some donations were received subsequent to the main phase of this campaign and these surplus funds will be earmarked for future use toward a similar purpose.

- David Bowd
(Treasurer)

A STUDY OF THE REPORT ON "TRANSPORT OF GIPPSLAND SAWN TIMBER"

"TRANSPORT OF GIPPSLAND SAWN TIMBER" is one of a series of reports prepared to make known the results of the Victorian Transport Study. It is a 20 page report, dated 1980. The Chairman of the Study Group was Mr. W. M. Lonie.

The committee concluded that -

"10.1 The regulation of Gippsland timber traffic is discriminatory and potentially damaging to the local timber industry. Millers are obliged to use rail transport for a large proportion of their production, paying up to \$100 per load more freight than if road transport were used. Timber which is being compulsorily diverted to VicRail is then being carried at a higher freight rate, but not high enough to cover VicRail's avoidable costs.

10.2 The Study Group concludes that in view of all the circumstances, all road restrictions should be lifted and because of the consequences of this to VicRail's freight business, the Bairnsdale - Orbost railway should be closed as soon as possible."

The present transport of sawn timber from mills in Gippsland east of Moe is controlled on the basis that if 2/3 of a sawmill's output is consigned by rail, the balance will be authorised for movement by road transport. A Transport Regulation Board permit for a truck load costs an average of \$19, according to the Report. This applies to timber consigned to places west of Berwick. Timber from mills in

other parts of Victoria is authorised for movement by road under permits without restriction, because there are no suitable loading facilities (the Study Group gathers), at these railway stations. The 1/3 - 2/3 system was introduced in 1953, prior to which the majority of timber transport was by rail.

With deregulation of sawn timber transport, the Study Group estimates that the timber traffic would be reduced by 75%, thus requiring a cutback in timber trains from two to one per day from Orbost. This would save, it is estimated, \$600,000 per year, but lost revenue would be \$1,400,000, thus resulting in an increased operating deficit of over \$1 million. This is why the committee recommends closure of the Orbost-Bairnsdale line.

I suggest that there are several inadequacies and omissions in this Report, some of which are detailed below:

1. The aims of the Victorian Transport Study are not stated anywhere in the Report. If there are no aims it is difficult to judge whether the Study achieved them or not. Judging by the biased nature of the Report, its aim may have been to prove that deregulation is desirable.

2. Section 2, "Submissions", mentions only one submission (from the Victorian Sawmillers Assn.) and an interview with Mr. S. Collins, a Bairnsdale sawmillier. I would have thought that other groups and individuals would have liked to have made submissions and/or been

interviewed, e.g. VicRail, Country Roads Board, Shire Councils, Transport Regulation Board, etc.. Perhaps these groups did make submissions, but no mention is made of them.

3. There is no mention of the transport of railway sleepers and poles which are produced in large numbers in East Gippsland, and which are transported almost exclusively by rail. Thus Section 4.1 is incorrect in stating "The (timber) traffic comprises sawn hardwood timber, used in house framing and structural work."

Does the stated revenue of VicRail for timber traffic include that for transport of sleepers and poles? This is not clear in the Report.

4. On economic matters the Report is extremely weak, for example:

(a) VicRail's costs and revenue for only one year (1978/79) are given. This particular year had very high maintenance costs because a number of trestle bridges were 'converted' to embankments during this year. In addition, VicRail had the cost of clearing flood debris from around the long trestle bridge over the Snowy River flood plain in late 1978. Surely a statement of the costs and revenue over the last five years or so, plus predicted data for the next few years would have been more honest and enlightening.

(b) The Study Group apparently accepted without further investigation, the vague

assertion of the V.S.A. that enforced use of rail transport incurs additional transport costs of "up to \$6 per cubic metre or \$100 per load". To how many sawmillers does the \$6 apply? To how many does \$1 apply? At what point (a) in the transport system is the "up to \$6" incurred? No answers are given. The answers would indicate where economies could be made.

(c) On 1978/79 figures, the loss incurred by the timber operation of VicRail was \$438,000, but what are the costs to be borne by the tax payers for an all-road transport system? Additional road maintenance would alone be probably greater than \$438,000 per year. (The Study Group predicted that closure of the railway would lead to an extra 58 semi-trailer movements, in both directions, west of Bairnsdale.)

What about increased expenditure on fuel, which is becoming more expensive every year? What about the costs of road accidents as a result of many more 38 tonne trucks on the narrow and winding Princes Highway between Orbost and Bairnsdale?

(d) The only mention of the Forests Commission's royalty equation system is in Section 2.3 where the points made by the VSA and Mr. Collins are recorded, viz. "the royalty equation system in which rail freights are a factor, is based on unrealistic data and

should be revised." The R.E.S. surely should be considered when discussing the costs of marketing timber in Melbourne.

5. Alternatives to dismantling the rail system were not examined, although Section 6.3 of the Report notes that APM Sawmills Pty Ltd at Waygara "enjoys a marked advantage by virtue of its location immediately adjacent to the railway." If extra such rail sidings were built to serve mills (west of Orbost) so that timber could be loaded directly into wagons, timber traffic and revenue would increase and make rail transport more profitable. In addition, older mills could be subsidised to rebuild next to a railway line.

In conclusion, the Study Group has failed to prove that road truck transport of timber will be a better use of community resources than the present road/rail system. The Report fails to acknowledge the substantial investment by VicRail in the Orbost-Bairnsdale timber carriage operation, e.g. replacement of timber bridges, provision of specially designed timber wagons, loading/offloading facilities. It is apparently willing to forego this State asset (which has other uses apart from carriage of timber) in preference for a road transport system whose costs have been given no consideration at all.

The proposed de-regulation of sawn timber transport clearly should not proceed until a full and proper study proves that de-regulation is in the community interest.

--Peter C. Fagg

Sandringham Branch of TTA Formed

The first suburban branch of the TTA was formed at a Public Meeting at Sandringham on Tuesday 28 April 1981. The following Office bearers were elected:

President: Wes Maley
Secretary: David Shaw
Treasurer: Frank Boyle

Six other members were elected to the Committee. They are:

Rod Bryant
Marie Salisbury
Graham Ihlein
Margaret Fraser
Audrey Boyle and
Rob McNeil.

Residents present at the Meeting strongly protested at the poor rail service to Sandringham, the high incidence of Red Rattlers on the line, and the need for co-ordination of bus and train services.

The first Meeting of the new Branch will be held on Tuesday 26 May 1981 at 8 p.m. in the Meeting Room behind the Old Town Hall in Abbott St. Sandringham. Prospective members are welcome.

The Branch will be autonomous including the management of its own budget. However an affiliation fee of \$3 for each member will be paid to the TTA central office so that individuals will have the same benefits and rights as other TTA members.

We wish the new Branch every success and hope that this development will spur other members to get together in similar local organizations or line co-ordination committees throughout Melbourne.

TTA Membership and Newsletter

The TTA Newsletter is published by and for members of the Train Travellers' Association.

The TTA is a voluntary, non-party political, non-profit organisation of train travellers and public transport users.

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

TTA membership includes quarterly issues of the TTA Newsletter for the basic subscription of \$3 annually. Those who can afford to are requested to become Donor Members at \$10 per year or to make donations towards the costs of printing, postage, hire of halls for meetings, &c. All members have equal status

Retiring office bearers elected for the year 1980/81 are:-

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----|
| <u>President:</u> | Dr. Charles Sowerwine | a/h |
| <u>Secretary:</u> | Ken McIntyre | " |
| <u>Vice-President:</u> | John Alexopoulos | " |
| <u>Treasurer:</u> | David Bowd | " |
| <u>Publicity Officer:</u> | Patrick O'Connor | " |
| <u>Council Members:</u> | Dr. Douglas Sherman | " |
| | Miss Lynne Thompson | " |
| | Pat Minihan | " |
| | Barry Gray | " |
| | Steve Howard | " |
| | Alex Boyne | " |
| | Robin Vowels | a/h |

and their category of membership may be changed, if they wish, when subscriptions are renewed.

Regular TTA activities consist of monthly meetings of the TTA Council to which all members are invited. The Council meets on the first Wednesday of each month (except January) in the Masonic Club premises, 164 Flinders Street, Melbourne at 5:30 p.m. Please enquire the location of the meeting room from Ground Floor reception and sign the Visitors' Book.

Other TTA functions are the preparation of briefs and submissions; liaison with VicRail managers through regular meetings; representations to the Premier and Transport Minister on suggestions, complaints, etc.; media interviews; speeches at public meetings; articles and letters to the press; publishing and distribution of leaflets; etc.

Members are encouraged to contribute articles to the Newsletter and offer suggestions and ideas to the Council for consideration.

WERRIBEE COULD SAVE THE ALTONA LINE

The now infamous Lonie Report contains among its recommendations a proposal that the Altona line be closed. Similar to the other recommended closures this one was based on economic grounds and little else. In the Altona situation however, the enquiry has failed to recognise the potential that could be tapped through a short extension of the line and the rationalisation that is also possible.

Work is currently underway to electrify the Geelong line from Newport to Werribee and on completion of this work a suburban electric service will be provided from the City to Werribee. It would not be difficult to extend the Altona line along an already existing reservation to Altona West and from there across a former swamp to join the Geelong line just beyond Galvin. The advantages of this scheme would be many and varied but essentially it would provide a greater potential patronage for the line, access by direct public transport between Altona, Lareston and Werribee with obvious advantages for employment, schooling, etc and an additional station at Altona West.

None of these proposals are new and the Altona line is one that has an interesting and chequered past. Originally constructed in the 1880's by the Altona and Laverton Bay Freehold and Investment Co Ltd to promote the sale of land in the area it ran, at one time, to a

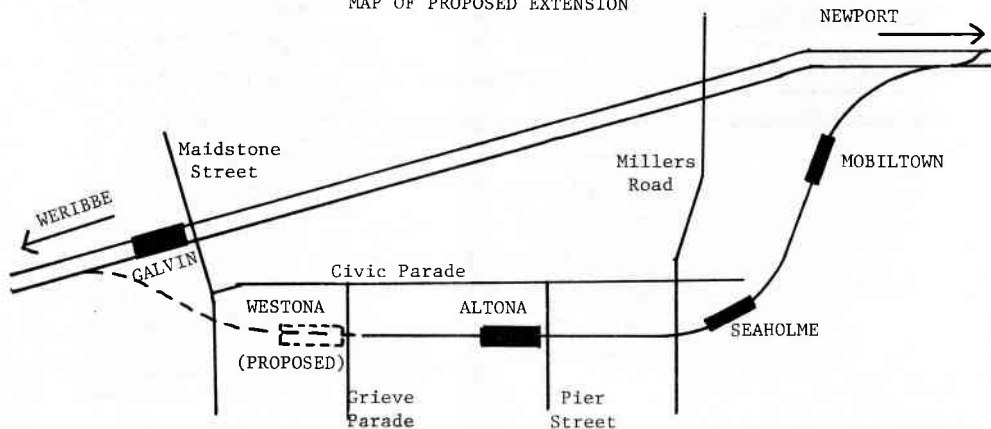
station known as Altona Beach about a kilometre beyond the present Altona station and from there along a later extension (1911) to a mine worked by the Melbourne and Altona Colliery Co near the present Ford Reserve. There is evidence that as part of the land selling scheme to which the line owes its birth it was proposed to extend it from Altona Beach station across what is now the MMBW Drainage Basin and Slough Road to join the Geelong line at a station called Edinburgh about a kilometre beyond Galvin. Part of this scheme has been reviewed in recent years with the proposal to extend the line to the site of Altona Beach station now proposed as Westona.

Extension to the Geelong line would provide a possible means of rationalisation during off peaks period when Werribee trains could work through Altona with resultant savings in Rolling Stock and operating costs etc. Additionally, the problem of crossing train movements on the single line could be eased by utilising the double track Geelong line to provide a more frequent service in peak hours without the need to store trains on the line.

Werribee via Altona as depicted on the map below has a lot to offer, all it now needs is a little imagination and foresight on the part of the Government to put the scheme into effect.

- Pat Minihan

MAP OF PROPOSED EXTENSION



Supplement to "TRAIN TRAVELLERS' ASSOCIATION Newsletter"

June 1981

Dear Member,

The TTA will commence its sixth year of operations from 1 July 1981.

The year before us - 1981/82 will be the most crucial for public transport in Victoria with the present threat and actions by the Government to close down and cut services throughout the State.

On behalf of the TTA Council, I request you earnestly not only to renew your subscription and membership for the year ahead but to interest members of your family, friends, and work-mates to join the TTA. We need the help of everyone concerned, if we are to persuade the Government to reverse the course it has adopted to reduce public transport services. In order to carry weight with the Government, we need a large body of committed members behind us.

We are pleased to report that we have almost trebled our membership in the past year, but we would still wish to have every train traveller as a member or supporter. Your membership fee, still only \$3 per annum, barely covers essential operating expenses and the cost of printing and mailing our quarterly Newsletter to you. If you can, we would request you to consider becoming a Donor Member at an annual subscription of \$10 thus helping us to publicise our policies to a wider audience.

I appeal to you to renew your membership with us and continue to fight for a balanced transport system in Victoria.

- Ken McIntyre
Hon. Secretary

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the TTA will be held on

Thursday 18 June 1981 commencing at 5:30 p.m.
in The Jacaranda Room, 2nd Floor, Victoria Hotel,
215 Little Collins Street, Melbourne.

Election of office bearers will be held at 6:45 p.m.

Please use the tear-off slips provided to renew your membership and/or nominate for office in the TTA.

To the Hon. Secretary
Train Travellers' Association
61 Leila Road,
Ormond 3163

Please renew my subscription for 12 months as a

() Regular Member \$3

() Donor Member \$10

Name:.....

Address:.....

..... Post Code:.....

Please tick if a receipt is required ()

NOMINATION FORM

To the Hon. Secretary
Train Travellers' Association
61 Leila Road,
Ormond 3163

I,

Address:.....

..... Post Code:.....

hereby nominate

Address:.....

..... Post Code:.....

for the position of

at the Annual Elections of TTA Office Bearers for 1981/2