

TTA NEWSLETTER

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A CASE OF PRIORITIES

— Editorial

The Transport Minister is to be congratulated for taking urgent action following the rail strike on 22nd March, which — as is common knowledge — was the outcome of a dispute over who should be served first in the Jolimont rail workers' canteen.

A certain Wran Government politician was not far from the mark when he said that if transport is going well, then so is the Government.

And for Mr Cain's Government, transport has been a sore point in recent months.

Co-incidence or not, the Government's prestige took a severe knock when opinion polls showed that the Government's acceptance had fallen 20% over the past year. (*Herald* 22/3/84)

The thorns in the Government's side have been a four-day state-wide rail strike in December, a furore over the Government utilities' handling of the grain harvest in December /January, Government grain levies and charges, the Metrol Mess from late December to the present time, a lightning 4-hour tram strike at Essendon Depot in early March, a 4-hour total tram stoppage on 21 March, a 4-hour train strike that led to disruptions until late in the evening of 22nd March, not to mention other problems brewing such as insufficient staff, and proposed closure of certain stations after 8pm.

The Transport Minister must act to rectify the daily chaos that has occurred since the introduction of Metrol. Far from getting better, late running has become worse. To be stranded in a train in the Jolimont yards for 30 minutes on the way to work is no joke. The delays continue to occur on the Flinders Street viaduct and in the Jolimont yards. It seems that virtually every train does a compulsory halt on the viaduct, and at best crawls across, no matter what the time of day. It's the same story in the Jolimont yards.

While a strike causes a day's inconvenience, and is gradually forgotten, if isolated, nothing is more guaranteed to raise and re-inforce a traveller's ire than the daily unpunctuality of erratic services. Repeated daily over several months, its long term effect will be far more insidious in loss of patronage, and in bad mouthing of the service, than ever any strike over trivia could be. The effects of such performance will never be countered by all the good will and public relations in the world.

GRAIN HAULING GRINDS DOWN GROWERS

The grain harvest this season was expected to earn the Government a massive \$67 million in revenue – in freight and port handling charges – an amount about half that collected in fares by the MTA. The crop itself was estimated to inject \$600 million into the State's economy.¹

The record grain harvest came as no surprise – it was inevitable following the record drought of the previous season, the ensuing good winter rains, and farmers making an all-out effort to recover from the bad seasons.

VicRail/V/Line re-organized its grain-handling and rail facilities compared to last year², and came under strong criticism from grain growers.^{3,4,5}

In previous years, grain growers trucked their grain to the nearest silo or receival depot. There are many scattered around the state, and most are sited beside rail lines.

This year, the Government arranged for a small number (14) of centralized grain receival depots (CRPs) to accept grain, and some 70 secondary receival points. This is a significant reduction on previous years. Some 200 silos were not serviced by rail during the harvesting period.²³

To make the pill palatable to growers, the Government offered a \$2 per load subsidy to growers as compensation for the additional distances they would have to truck their grain to the CRPs.⁶

V/Line Slows Grain Harvest

The scheme was designed by VicRail to make haulage efficient (for the railways, but not for growers, as we shall see).

It did not take growers long to discover that, far from being efficient, the new scheme was riddled with inefficiency. Before, growers could deposit up to 9 truckloads per day at their local silos. This season, the same growers could only manage as little as two trips per day.⁷ Extra time was spent in waiting queued up at silos to unload.^{7,8} The longest waiting time was 28½ hours recorded at Nhill as at December.²³

The Government responded with claims that reorganization enabled the railways to shift more grain. Not only was this claim demonstrably false, it wasn't the real reason at all. Any improvement in "efficiency" was not through centralization, but by improvements last year at the North Geelong silo.[†] There, trains can be emptied and turned around in three hours. Formerly it took 23 hours!²

As for centralization, it was brought about not through a desire to improve the grower's lot, but because of a shortage of locomotives and a 25% shortage in wagons.⁹ The shortage in locomotives in turn was caused by requisition and over-use of locomotives for passenger services (for example, two locomotives to haul three passenger coaches, 4 locomotives for a 4-car passenger train).¹⁰ In addition, 10 locomotives formerly used for grain haulage are in the process of being stripped and rebuilt for passenger service.⁵ Still others are interstate being overhauled.

There has not been a program to acquire and commission new locomotives prior to the wheat season, nor has there been a contingency plan to deal with the lateness of the refurbishing program for existing locomotives.

Clearly the shortcomings must be borne by the Government and inefficient management.

Growers Watch as Rain Beats Railways

Unable to dump their wheat at CRPs, growers faced harvesting delays. These delays in turn meant that much of the crop suffered damage which largely could have been avoided. Torrential rainstorms in Victoria in early January decimated one-third of the crop. Mr Cam admitted that delays in handling the crop caused losses through rain damage.¹¹

Portland Line Problems

Growers also criticized the Government for delays and derailments on the single track

[†] In addition, wheat from the north of the state went to Adelaide, and that from the NSW Riverina was handled by NSW, thus relieving V/Line of some of its longest hauls.

GRAIN HAULING GRINDS DOWN GROWERS (Cont.)

Portland line,[†] the only access to one of two Victorian grain ports – the other being Geelong. The delays were caused by speed restrictions.⁹ Facilities at Portland were not fully operational prior to Christmas, resulting in delays of a few hours to each train.¹²

As for derailments, several wagons derailed near Heywood on 20/12/83,¹² and six loaded wagons derailed near Heathmere on 5/1/84, blocking the Princes Highway as well as the rail link.¹³ A major de-railment at Deep Lead on 19/12/83 – in which 11 wagons left the track – took 24 hours to clear and blocked grain transport to Portland.^{14,15} In all, three major derailments on the Portland line.²⁴ Other derailments occurred in the north of the state.¹⁶

The railways has had plenty of time to get its main grain lines in order in the 18 months since the elections. There can be no excuse for speed restrictions and derailments caused by bad track.

Grain line Upgrade After Harvest

After the wheat had bolted, the STA locked the stable door – on 21/1/84 it called tenders to upgrade two sections of the Portland line.¹⁸ In November 1983, V/Line announced that "upgrading of the Ararat - Portland line will also be commenced"¹⁹ [our emphasis]

To be fair, not all of the blame for damaged wheat lies with the railways. A rail union's strike stopped grain trains for four days from December 5th (although over 4,000 tonnes of grain were moved during this period by road trucks some of which were brought in specially from interstate.¹⁷ However, this was far less than the 50,000 tonnes of grain that V/Line expected to haul during those same four days.²) And at Geelong, a grain elevator had an unfortunate improvement – as fast as wheat was picked up by elevator buckets, it was falling down again on its way up – so much so, that by the time the buckets reached the top, they were virtually empty.

In February 1984, the Government announced it was employing consultants to report on transporting the 1983-4 wheat crop, but took pains to point out that their engagement was not an admission that transport of the harvest could have been improved.⁴

Light Locomotives and Grain Lines

One of VicRail's strategies must be questioned. The Government accepted its proposal to use some light locomotives for passenger services. In doing so, a greater proportion of heavy locomotives had to be used for grain hauling, with the consequence that train speeds often had to be less than they would otherwise have been. Most of the grain lines have been built and maintained for light locomotives. Of course, they could be operated by larger locomotives if line maintenance were improved, but that hasn't been done either, and in any case it was too large a task to be done in time for the 1983/4 harvest.

Delays Cost \$13 Million

By having inefficient rail and grain handling facilities, which forced grain growers to be inefficient, the Government stood to lose this state millions of dollars in ruined grain. As it was, one-sixth of the 3.7 million tonne harvest was damaged.²⁰ By mid-January 268,000 tonnes of damaged wheat had been lodged at silos.²¹ At \$20 penalty per tonne, this lost growers \$5.36 million that otherwise would have been in their pockets. However, the actual total loss due to rain was estimated at \$13 million.⁵

Footnote:

Earlier in 1983, there were speed restrictions over six bridges on the Portland line – of 15 and 30 km/h – for powerful C-class locomotives. Further, the lack of a turntable at Portland meant that an additional (redundant) locomotive had to be tied up escorting C-class locomotives back to Ararat, where they could be turned.²² It is not known whether any of the bridges was repaired, or if the turntable was installed, prior to the harvest.

[†] See *Background to the Portland-Ararat Rail Problem* elsewhere in this issue.

GRAIN HAULING GRINDS DOWN GROWERS (Cont.)

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Map courtesy Victorian Transport Study

GRAIN HAULING GRINDS DOWN GROWERS (Cont.)

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BACKGROUND TO THE PORTLAND - ARARAT RAIL PROBLEM

Grain growers have repeatedly called for the re-opening of the Balmoral rail line (Hamilton to Noradjuha), dating back to 1979 when the line was closed. The call in the *Wimmera Mail Times* of 16/9/83 was a typical instance. The line was the subject of a specific paper produced by the Victorian Transport Study. Even after the line was closed, and trains could no longer negotiate the track, the Grain Elevators Board was erecting silos at rail sidings along the line. Superphosphate was being delivered by road and unloaded into railway wagons that had been abandoned on the line, to simulate a railway service. (*The Hamilton - Noradjuha (Balmoral) Railway*, Victorian Transport Study, 1980.

Apart from covering a major area of the wheat belt, this line was a significant link in the grain network before it was closed in 1980, because it provided an additional path to Portland.

Both rail lines, one from Hamilton to Horsham via Balmoral, and the other from Hamilton to Ararat are single track; re-opening and relaying the Balmoral line would effectively provide the advantages of double track working over this busy section. Instead, VicRail chose to construct passing loops on the still single-track Hamilton to Ararat section, and to leave the Balmoral line closed. This could be a major blunder.

In April 1983, Mr Crabb told Parliament that the Government would consider re-opening the Balmoral line "in the context of improving grain handling". (*Wimmera Mail Times* 16/9)

The Carpolac line to Hamilton is, importantly, 120km shorter via Balmoral than via Ararat, 76km shorter for the western line and branches west of Horsham, and 18km shorter for the Patchewollock line. For a fully-loaded grain train, that 76km can add an extra 2 hours of travelling time (assuming that the Balmoral line were to the same standard as the alternative). (*V/Line* charges "ghost" rates based on the shorter distance via Balmoral.) (*ibid*.)

Installing longer passing loops in the Hamilton to Ararat line and resignalling will cost about one-half that needed to relay the Balmoral line using second-hand rails released by the current upgrading of the western line.

And the upgraded Portland line will still be single track!

—Robin Vowels

INTERSTATE TRAVEL

REDUCE TRAVEL TIME FOR INTER-CITY SERVICES

The reduction in fares for rail travel between Melbourne and Sydney, and Melbourne and Adelaide, available from the 12th February 1984, is welcomed.

While the fare reductions are long overdue, they are not enough to make interstate and intrastate rail travel attractive to users.

Much of the interstate travel market has been lost to private bus services, because of lower fares and better record of punctuality and efficiency.

Time is the essence of travel, and trip time plays an important part of one's decision on the mode of travel.

Our inter-city trains are unattractive because of the overall journey times involved.

The journey time for the Southern Aurora between Melbourne and Sydney — a distance by rail of 961km — is 13 hours. The average speed is 73 km/h.

The journey time from Melbourne to Adelaide — a distance of 777km — is 12 hours, covered at an average speed of 65 km/h.

These times and speeds are pre-historic when compared to the advanced rail systems in other countries.

As long as cars and buses can compete more favourably in terms of speed and overall trip time, rail travel will not attract patronage.

A trip by bus to Perth takes 48 hours from Melbourne; by train it takes 57 hours with two changes of trains. In terms of cost, a return trip is less than \$200 by bus, while an economy sleeper by rail is \$258 EACH WAY!

One unfortunate reason for the backward condition of Victoria's interstate/intrastate rail services is the years of neglect of the system by successive governments. Inadequate track capacity; antiquated signalling and rolling stock and inefficiency in management and performance, are the reasons for the dilapidated (and consequently) poorly-patronised services.

New rolling stock introduced in the latter stages of the previous Government, has seen some increase in patronage of the intrastate services. Improvements in efficiency could see further slight improvements in patronage. But these marginal improvements are insufficient.

What are urgently required are extensive and immediate improvements to track and signalling facilities, which would facilitate higher speeds and punctuality of trains.

Our precious transport dollars should be expended in improving the track, signalling and rolling stock facilities on our interstate and intrastate rail systems, rather than on "building or expanding white elephant freeways" which the Government said it would not build, but did.

Thousands of people die and are injured on the roads in car accidents, because of the congestion on the highways connecting our main cities. These travellers can be drawn away from their cars and into trains — just as has happened in more advanced countries — by the provision of fast and cheap train travel.

Marginal reductions in fares will not be enough to attract greater patronage to our country and interstate trains. We must have an appreciable reduction in overall travel time.

— Ken McIntyre

CAVEAT EMPTOR

(or, Here We Go Round The Mulberry Bush)

To counteract declining patronage on its interstate passenger services, V/LINE introduced off-season 'promotional' fares in the latter half of 1983.

A recent example in November and early December was the special return fare to Sydney on the Southern Aurora. The special fare for a passenger (including a sleeping berth), together with a car on the MotoRail service, was \$200. This was a tempting offer compared with the corresponding normal offer of \$330. [The adult return fare with

INTERSTATE TRAVEL

CAVEAT EMPTOR (Cont.)

sleeper was discounted by \$60, and free berths were provided for accompanying children, provided that spare berths were available — Ed.]

However, anyone contemplating taking advantage of such an offer had best be aware of the pitfalls should they be unable to proceed with or complete their intended journey for one reason or another.

Having had much difficulty on previous occasions with VicRail in trying to find out one's entitlement to a refund on the fare paid in various circumstances, I was not surprised to find that the situation is still the same under V/Line (State Transport Authority) administration.

In seeking information on refunds this time, I enquired from the following sources in person:

- ★ Information Kiosk at Flinders Street Station;
- ★ Interstate Booking Office at Flinders Street Station;
- ★ Enquiries counter at Museum Station; and
- ★ Interstate Booking Office at Museum station.

I also made telephone enquiries to:

- ★ Transport Information Centre;
- ★ V/Line Interstate Reservations; and
- ★ V/Line Passenger Services Section.

In some cases, the response was that they had no information available, while in other cases, officials said that they didn't know, but offered their opinions on what might be allowed by way of a refund.

The V/Line telephone interstate reservations service official said that in the case of the special return service to Sydney, no refund would be given on unused return portion of tickets, but provided the booking was cancelled before the scheduled departure time, then a refund would be available subject to the standard cancellation penalties.

However, this statement was refuted by the official I spoke to in V/Line's Passenger Services Section who said that no refunds at all would be allowed on unused or partly used tickets issued under "promotional" fares.

I then asked what would be the situation if one were unable to use the return portion of a "promotional" fare ticket, for example, because of a strike. He at first declined to give an answer on the ground that it was a "hypothetical" question (hardly a valid reason as it turned out, because a strike did occur in the first week of December during the promotional period), but then said that he would try to obtain a ruling from a senior officer and ring me back.

This he did later the same day, and said that in such a case one would be allowed a 50% refund of the "promotional" fare, but only if one had a return booking for a definite date which was affected by the stoppage. If one had an open return, the situation would be unclear.

They refused to give me a written statement of the conditions relating to such refunds. However, in view of the contradictory information given to me by various officials, I asked that a circular setting out these conditions be sent to all offices handling interstate bookings. The Passenger Services official said that he would raise a written

INTERSTATE TRAVEL

CAVEAT EMPTOR (Cont.)

request to this effect, but he intimated that he had no confidence that any action on it would be taken.

The concept of off-season fares and tariffs, only lately tried by the Railways, is well-established in other sectors of the travel industry. There is much potential to boost interstate rail travel by utilising excess capacity in the off-season and thereby helping to reduce pressures at peak holiday times.

However, it is difficult to see any justification for not allowing refunds under standard conditions on off-season fares. Normal refund penalties are high enough already, and the imposition of even more stringent conditions on off-season fares can only discourage people from taking advantage of them.

Further, V/Line should publicise the availability of off-season fares well in advance and on a regular basis each year in order that people can plan their holidays to make use of the rail system in the off-season, if practicable, especially MotoRail services where available.

Incidentally — unlike Victoria — in New South Wales, the general conditions relating to refunds on fares are widely published in their country timetable booklet and prominently displayed on posters at stations. Whilst this is a distinct advantage for consumers north of the border compared with the secretive approach adopted in Victoria, there are still some deficiencies in the information published there. In the case of "promotional" fares, for example, the notices merely state that special conditions apply, and there is no general information as to the rights of ticket holders to refunds where services are cancelled or disrupted.

— David Bowd

SYDNEY CAPER FARES

Train fares between Melbourne and Sydney were reduced from 12 February in an attempt to win back passengers lost to bus lines offering as low as \$25 per single.

A berth on the Southern Aurora (single fare) dropped from \$95 to \$66.50. A single first class seat is \$52.50 (formerly \$75) and a single economy fare is \$37 (formerly \$53) (*Age* 3/2/84).

However, these fares still do not compare with the much lower coach fares, nor does the Spirit of Progress compare in terms of journey times (coach 11 hours; Spirit nearly 14 hours), or in food.

Cheap fares weren't

I decided to take the train to Sydney on 24th February, at the new fare. Imagine my consternation when the fare turned out to be still \$53, not the new fare of \$37. The reason? You have to book 7 days in advance. (This wasn't covered in the press report.) I did not make a return booking as my plans were not then fixed. Just as well as I didn't. I booked in Sydney on the 26th, for travel that day. The friendly ticket seller offered me a \$37 ticket. There was no waiting period. He even consulted his reference book and advised that one would have to book a week in advance after 31st March. He opined that \$37 would probably become the regular fare.

It Costs More to go Uphill to Sydney

On return to Melbourne, I had a fascinating conversation with V/Line. Yes, they

INTERSTATE TRAVEL

SYDNEY CAPER FARES (Cont.)

confirmed that in Melbourne you have to book 7 days in advance in order to get the new fare. I said that there was no waiting period in Sydney. I pointed out that the service was jointly operated, and why should it cost \$53 Melbourne to Sydney and only \$37 Sydney to Melbourne. V/Line responded that the "new fares were V/Line's initiative" and that "NSW was acting irresponsibly" in not having a waiting period. [You have to be joking.]

He said V/Line was trying to keep the Government subsidy to a minimum. [Truly a novel way of attracting passengers.]

I said that \$53 was not an attractive fare. I cited the bus fare of \$25. The V/Line representative replied that the bus "wandered all over the place". I rejoined that for this fare, the bus journey was direct along the Hume Highway, and took only 11 hours of travelling compared to almost 14 for the Spirit.

Don't buy your ticket from V/Line

V/Line is up to a caper of its own. The message is clear. If you have to book at short notice, purchase your return ticket interstate. So why not? — it will save you at least \$15 on a single economy fare, and \$28.50 on the Aurora, and you could even double that on a return journey.

V/Line also said that a ticket purchased 7 days in advance guaranteed them an occupied seat (which means that if you are ill or for some other reason can't travel, you lose your dough).

— Robin Vowels

[Footnote: On my trip on the 24th Feb., the buffet car was closed until 7.30pm owing to "shortage of staff". What a way to promote a "service".]

REDUCED FARES ON SYDNEY - MELBOURNE CORRIDOR

A new fare between Sydney and Melbourne offering a 30% discount for adult travel was introduced from Sunday, February 12, in a joint venture by the SRA and V/Line.

It will be known as CAPER fare (Customer Advanced Purchase Excursion — Rail). The new 30% discount will apply to all trains in the Sydney - Melbourne corridor.

This means that rail travel from Sydney to Melbourne can be purchased for as little as \$37.00.

To launch the promotion, all tickets to Melbourne from 12/2 to 31/3 will be available at the reduced rate. After this, each of the six trains will be given a quota of "Caper" seats. When these are sold, normal rates will apply.

[Reproduced with permission from *Railway Digest*, Australian Railway Historical Society (NSW Division), March 1984.]

Laverton Air Show

For the Laverton Air Show on 21st August 1983, the MTA operated diesel-hauled Harris sets from Spencer Street to Laverton. There were six special trains. In consequence the MTA closed off all suburban services through Footscray — replacing them with buses — claiming that it would be too difficult to run the extra trains intermixed with the normal frequent Sunday services. (What nonsense, of course.)

Full marks for putting on the specials, but the MTA forgot one small point — advertising. The trains ran virtually empty.

Too Noisy

The first of the B-class locomotives refurbished in Adelaide had to be returned to Adelaide unused owing to excessive noise levels in the driving cabin. (*Age* 16/3/84)

HAMBURG

Public transport in Hamburg is often held up as an example of how an attractive and efficient public transport service can be provided without a monolithic state or municipal owner and without large subsidies.

Hamburg is the largest city in West Germany, about the size of Paris and thus about a third as large as London. But, like London, it's a city built around a port, and the docks zone still dominates a large area of the inner city. It has the problem of a city centre and inner city which is losing population, while the pressure is on suburban centres to house new office and shop developments.

Anyone who travels by public transport in Hamburg cannot help but be-impressed. Services are frequent, integrated and cheap. A minimum fare, for example, is DM1.50 or about 43c when you've taken into account different purchasing powers. DM6, or about \$1.75 will buy you a day's free travel over most of the public transport system. And the system is large, with nearly 2,000km of rail routes, 180 bus routes (needing 1,400 buses) and 13 ferry routes. The system is totally integrated, too, with ticketing entirely interchangeable between bus, train and ship — just one ticket, bought from a machine at every station and most bus stops, will cover you for any journey no matter how many vehicles of different types you need to use. Fares are worked out on a zonal system, similar to that in use in London now, and, naturally, most regular passengers have passes of one sort or another. And if you don't know how to get somewhere you don't need to do anything more than ring up a computer, tell it where you are, where you want to get to and by when and it will automatically tell you the best route and what time to leave.

People like using the system, too, as it is clean and very welcoming. All the stations are completely open, for example, with none of the barriers and queues to get in and out which we have come to expect. Instead, if you're caught without a ticket — and teams of inspectors are constantly on the system making spot checks at stations — there is a penalty fare of DM40, which you can only avoid if your story of how the ticket office was shut and all the machines out of order is proved to be true. But fraud is said to lose only 3% of revenue — in Victoria fraud levels are around \$10 million annually.

Frequent visitors to Europe will hardly be surprised at this sort of service — it's what Europeans have come to expect. But most people would expect it to be paid for with high subsidies. A similar level of service in Amsterdam, for example, needs 80% of its costs to come from subsidy; and Paris, frequently quoted, expects its passengers to pay for only 37% of their costs. But in Hamburg, bus passengers pay for 60% of their costs and the metro is subsidised to an even smaller extent — passengers pay 75% of their costs.

Is the Government, then, right? Are large subsidies unnecessary and is the right approach efficient, independent operators (7 separate operators supply Hamburg's needs) giving the service that the market place demands? Well, whether that's true or not, the case in Hamburg, when you look into it in more detail, doesn't show one way or another, but it does give a number of other lessons which could well be picked up here.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



HAMBURG

Fifteen or twenty years ago, public transport in Hamburg was in a similar state to that in London today. The service was run down and, more importantly, it was very

fragmented. The city ran the bus service and had a three-line underground system, while the German Railways also ran an extensive suburban rail network. Independent operators also ran a number of local rail lines and bus and ferry services. And, exactly as in London, anyone who wanted to travel by different modes needed to buy a separate ticket for each stage of their journey and the operators not only didn't speak to one another, but actively competed for passengers. However, a five year fight by a far-sighted director of the city transport, initially aimed at through ticketing, resulted in the formation of the Hamburg Transport Community, or Hamburg Verkehrs Verbund (HVV).

This is the body that most passengers see. It is made up of representatives of the seven operators in the Greater Hamburg area and is chaired by the State Transport Chairman — the equivalent of the chairman of any metropolitan country's public transport committee. The biggest partners, by far, are the Hamburg City Transport Department and the German Railways, providing 91% of all the services; the German Post Office is another of the smaller partners. All the operators have agreed that the HVV takes over their powers for planning, marketing and investment direction.

Only 85 people work for the HVV, but these people plan services and frequencies and decide which operator is best suited to run them — it's then up to the operator to provide the equipment necessary, although clearly what is available is taken into consideration when planning the service. On all the services the revenue goes straight to HVV, and not to the operators, who are paid back, not on the basis of passengers carried, but on the basis of seat miles operated. *Thus there is a strong incentive for the operators to offer the maximum service, and the haggles at HVV are more over who can run most buses, trains or ships rather than what is the minimum necessary.*

While the individual operators may make a loss (and German Railways make more losses than any other railway network in Western Europe), the state makes up the main difference between costs and revenue, up to a limit, but it has instituted, together with the federal government, a series of devices which makes it cheaper. *One of the most important of these devices is a minimum density plan.* This plan concentrates development in the city centre and along a number of corridors leading into the suburbs — corridors which run along the main underground and suburban railway routes. The city is, thus, almost ideally planned for public transport use, with the highest population densities in the close vicinity of the railway stations. Many of the stations are important interchanges between the modes, and the bus network is largely designed to feed into the rail network, hence it needs a larger subsidy than the railways.

Park-and-ride is also encouraged, and one of the pre-conditions of any developer wishing to provide any car parking in inner and central Hamburg is that he must pay for the state to construct an equal number of parking places at a suburban park-and-ride station. As these stations are all in high density areas, building car parks there is necessarily

expensive, hence the developer is discouraged from providing any but a minimum number of car parking spaces in the city centre. The motoring and commercial organisations also help promote park-and-ride schemes — the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry actively discourages calls for more roads into inner Hamburg, saying that the public transport system is quite good enough for everyone to use!

In addition to revenue subsidy, HVV also receives capital support. Improvements and additions to the basic infrastructure are paid for by the state and federal governments. The federal government contributes 60% of the cost of any approved public transport project, out of a tax on petrol. The state government contributes the other 40% — thus neither the operators nor HVV have to bear any capital costs.

Overall, then, Hamburg is a good example of a public transport system where a level of subsidy which is not high can still produce an excellent service for the public. But it is not achieved by maximising the virtues of efficient entrepreneurs, but rather by total integration (instead of operators competing with one another), heavy capital investment, fairly tight fiscal and planning control — in a way designed to benefit public transport and discourage car traffic, and close integration between the operating partnership and the state.

— {Extract of Nick Lester's *Burger King* in *Transport Report (UK)*, Vol. 7 No. 5 1983}

Comparing BART To Other Systems

Riders will be pleased to know that compared to other rapid rail transit systems in the U.S., BART is a nationwide leader in several categories.

A 1982 federal government report on hundreds of rapid rail, bus, and streetcar systems shows that BART runs more trains with fewer employees than any other rail system in the country.

The report by the Urban Mass Transit Administration also shows that BART's cost-per-passenger mile of 16 cents is less than the average of 20 cents, and its cost-per-vehicle mile of \$4.05 is less than the \$4.40 average of nine other similar transit systems in the country.

One area where BART falls behind other rail systems is in cost of operation per passenger. Ward Belding, supervisor of BART's Office of Research, explains, "The BART system favors longer trips, and our costs drop significantly the longer a passenger rides the train."

In Boston, for example, the rapid rail system travels through densely populated areas, and the stations are closely linked. This means on average, 171 passengers an hour occupy a single train car, but their trip

duration is only 9.1 minutes.

BART, on the other hand, traverses long stretches of open water and through less populated suburban areas. As a result, an average of only 49 passengers occupy a car per hour, but their ride typically lasts 24.9 minutes, the longest of any rapid rail system.

Belding points out that in addition to longer rides, BART trains also travel at higher speeds than those in most other transit systems. "It's difficult to compare transit systems precisely," he says, "because they all have such different operating parameters." □

— Reproduced from *Bart Times*, Jul.-Aug. 1983.

Gold Coast's Monorail Bid

A German firm wants to build a bullet-train monorail between Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

Discussions are said to have taken place between Queensland's Transport Minister and officials of the Gold Coast Combined Chamber of Commerce.

The monorail, capable of speeds of up to 400 km/h, operates on the principle of magnetic levitation.

In Germany, the Rhine-Rhur Transport Association (VRR) was created in January 1980 to co-ordinate integration of public transport services in the Rhine-Rhur, an area of 5,000 square kilometres and with a population of 7.4 million.

The public transport network consists of 41 rail services operated by two government bodies, light rail transit (LRT) lines operating on segregated right-of-ways, a monorail, 61 tram lines and 605 bus routes, operated by 19 local organizations.

VRR divided the area into 49 zones and 204 local zones (called honeycombs because of their hexagonal shape). Each honeycomb is about 6 km in diameter and overlaps its neighbour.

A passenger travelling beyond a honeycomb boundary can travel throughout the area zone for the price of a second "fare stage". Most small towns occupy a zone, while large cities form two zones.

Within a honeycomb, the travel time is 40 minutes (first fare stage); it is 90 minutes in the area zone and an adjoining area zone (second fare stage). For longer journeys there are three more fare stages. The highest fare covers 50 km and the ticket is valid for three hours.

Tickets are multi-modal (tram, train, and bus.)

Ticket types were replaced by three basic kinds:

- * Single: These tickets are purchased on bus and tram, or from machines and are cancelled by the passenger at the start of the journey.
- * Four-Journey: These tickets are 25% cheaper than four single tickets, and are available for fare stages 1 and 2.
- * Season: This ticket is available in 5 types:
 - * 24-hour (fare stages 1 and 2) includes free travel for two accompanying children.
 - * Weekly (cost of 10 singles);
 - * Monthly (cost of 4 weeklies);
 - * Monthly off-peak, for senior citizens;
 - * Monthly student.

Monthly season tickets can be purchased annually and are paid by instalments through a bank. The purchaser gets a rebate of two months' free travel.

Extensions to services are being built, and interchanges are included at new stations.

—Source: *International Railway Journal*, August 1983

Parcels

The German Federal Railway is attempting to improve profitability of its parcels and freight sections.

It offers an overnight service on freight travelling more than 200 km, and gives a 10% rebate for late delivery. An overnight parcels express is being developed.

As one example, it carries freshly-cut flowers 800 km to Hamburg in a special carriage that is attached to the *schauinsland* at a brief stop at the Badische Bahnhof.

It is reducing staff and operating and infrastructure costs.

Source: *International Railway Journal*, September 1983

Railcars

The German Federal Railway is operating new railcars (one and two-unit sets) designed for one-man operation. With the aid of mirrors, the driver observes passengers boarding and alighting. The entrances are designed for the passage of wheelchairs and disabled passengers. The driver can sell tickets from the cab.

The two-car set weighs 61 tonnes, and both the one-car sets and two-car sets have a maximum speed of 120 km/h.

Source: *International Railway Journal*, September 1983

CYCLING BY TRAIN

On a brilliant sunny spring Saturday afternoon in October, we decided to make a cycling trip from Epping to Diamond Creek. This is an enjoyable run of about 16 km that can be easily completed in a couple of hours. It is a ride that children would enjoy too.

In view of the excellent weather, we decided to detour to take in a cruise along the Yarra bank.

We set out after lunch for King Street which slopes gently down to the river. We crossed it at Queen's Bridge, then pedalled along Riverside Avenue, past the boat sheds to the start of the cycling track.

A leisurely ride took us under Swan Street Bridge and Henderson Street and finally to Punt Road. We had the choice here of retracing our path to Princes Bridge, or of heading direct to West Richmond Station to pick up the Epping train. We decided that the latter would be shorter and would provide new scenery.

Turning north from Alexandra Avenue, we were greeted with a steady climb from Brunton Avenue as we made our way to Highett Street and West Richmond Station.

The platform was unmanned, but we decided to check out the city-side platform — which meant a trek of 0.4km — to see whether tickets could be purchased there. Fortunately they could be, and luckily an Epping-bound train was due in a few minutes.

It wasn't too long before Epping was reached for the start of the day's highlight.

We set out directly north from the Station to Greenbrook Drive, turned right, and in a few minutes were at McDonald's Road. Turning right again, we followed an easterly course for Morang South. It wasn't very long before built-up Epping was left behind. The road which has good surface is gently undulating and makes for easy cycling.

At Morang South we halted for refreshments, but soon continued along Gorge Road, aptly named because the relatively flat road abruptly gives way to a steep descent to Plenty River.

A short break at the picnic area is worthwhile, to build up reserves for the long steep climb out of the gorge. There are barbeque facilities and toilets (toilets at Epping Station were being rebuilt) but no tap, so bring your own drinking water. A walking/cycling track along the river can make an interesting diversion.

The road out is best taken in stages, especially with children, but there is nothing unmanageable and it is soon over.

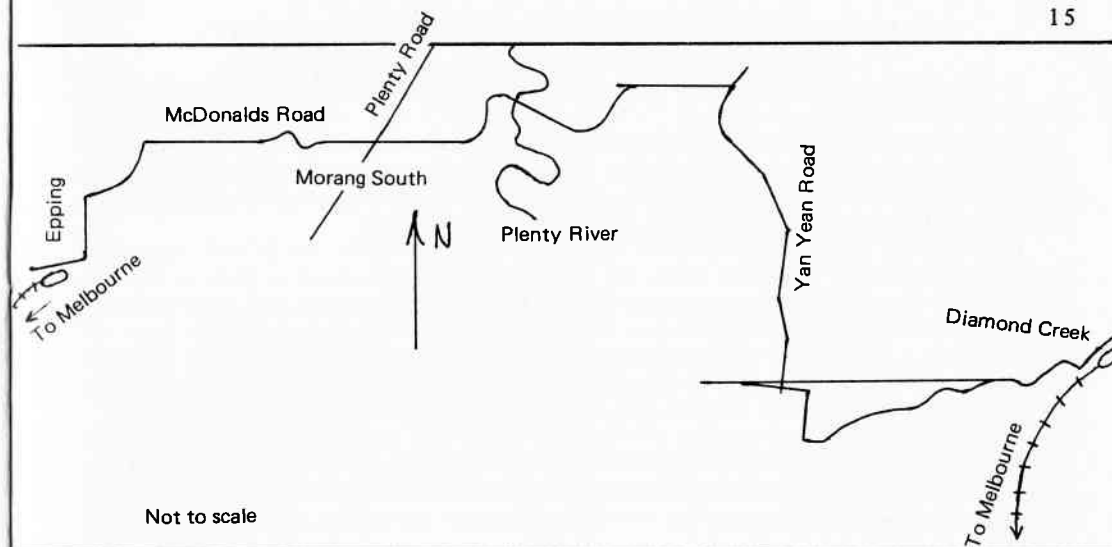
It's not long before the Yan Yean Road is reached on a newly widened and resurfaced road. Here we turned south. Some good views are to be enjoyed to the east. There's a milk bar at Howell Road, handy for an icecream prior to embarking on the home stretch.

The remainder of the journey is downhill. We turned east at Diamond Creek Road and followed it all the way into Main Street and straight to the railway station. On the way, good views are to be obtained to the north.

Fortunately again, a train was due in 7 minutes (more by luck than good management, as the service is hourly). We were wondering what kind of train to expect because of the "death" of the Sunday red rattler in a fire reported in the April Newsletter (p. 11). We were surprised when an unkempt single-car red rattler arrived to whisk us to Eltham where we picked up a city-bound Harris train.

We left the rail at Victoria Park Station for a direct ride home.

— Robin Vowels



BOTTOM OF THE HARBOUR TRAINS

Though the State Government is not involved in tax evasion associated with bottom of the harbour schemes, nevertheless asset stripping is still alive and well in Railway Country.

You believed that the Government would reinstate lines closed by the former Government following the Lonie Report?

You thought that the Lonie Report could be forgotten?

Back in June, rail services were suspended on the Bolangum to Lubeck line owing to an unsafe bridge at Rapanyup. In December, at the peak of the wheat harvest, Mr Crabb closed the line permanently. [*Newsrail*, January 1984]

For quite some time, the Bright line has seen freight trains "as and when required" (VicRail jargon for weaning users off the freight service.) Facilities are gradually being removed as that line too is being run into the ground. The Murtleford to Bright section was closed by this Government. [Sources: *NewsRail*; *Ovens Valley Railway*, W. Larsen, Bright, 1983.]

Now Kerang Shire Council has been requested to comment into an enquiry as to whether to upgrade or to abandon the Korong Vale to Robinvale and Kerang to Swan Hill and Kooloonong lines. [*Newsrail*, February 1984]

The Government's attempt to close 24 country rail freight centres — which precipitated the four-day strike in early December — might be viewed as another stripping of state-owned (that is, owned by the residents of this state) assets.

— Robin Vowels

ALTONA LINE SHAPING UP

The Ministry of Transport has called for tenders for building a 1.4 km rail formation from Altona to Maidstone Street West Altona. Tenders closed 5/3/84. (*Age* 11/2/84)

This follows an earlier invitation of tenders for 2.8 km between Maidstone Street and Merton Street Altona Meadows. (*Age* 10/12/83)

Wheat

Between Hamilton and Branhholme, the electric staff was abolished and replaced with Train and Ticket Staff from 4 November. In layman's terms, an automatic signalling system was replaced with a manual one — and with the wheat harvest imminent.

TRAIN DELAYS AND MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

A \$10 million Train Describer System was introduced on 26 December 1983 to improve train punctuality.

Since the introduction of this computerized facility, punctuality of all suburban trains has been haywire with continual delays to trains of anything up to 25 minutes. Teething problems can be expected in the first few weeks, but when the delays continued beyond the first week of February, public anger and resentment came to a boil.

The TTA was flooded with scores of complaints from irate users. On 8/2/84, we invited Transport Minister Mr Crabb to travel the trains with us or to spend an hour at Flinders Street Station in order to meet users and to witness for himself the delays and inconvenience.

In addition to personal inconvenience, late running affects the economy of the State. In July 1980, in a joint study with the Victorian Employers Federation, we proved that late attendance at work owing to late trains, was costing the State economy over \$450 million in lost production and sales, and workers lost over \$90 million out of their pay packets.

In opposition, Mr Crabb readily travelled the trains with us to gain votes, and to show up the inefficiency of the then Government. Now as Minister and responsible for the running of the system, he seems to be unprepared to travel or to meet users.

The Points at Issue:

In a parliamentary system of government, an MP is elected to serve his/her constituents. A Minister is appointed to serve those people for whom his ministry is responsible. In showing quite clearly that he is not interested in his constituents, namely public transport users, Mr Crabb has failed to uphold his ministerial responsibility and trust.

The taxpayers and transport users have a right to demand better performance from the staff who are managing and running the system. They have a right to know what is wrong with the system; what action is being taken to rectify the failures, and when such action will be taken.

The total contempt in which users were treated (being kept ignorant of what was happening) was irresponsibility at its worst.

Following the recent higher fares and the MET MESS, this continual unpunctuality has and will continue to force users away from the system. Users cannot be expected to put up with regular late attendance at work, school or appointments. The inevitable decline in patronage can only further destroy the future of the system.

A press conference was held on 13 February in the city to express these issues through the media to the travelling public. Mr Crabb was invited, but again showed his lack of responsibility to come out and to meet users.

One wonders how sincere was the Government in its promises to improve public transport.

— Ken McIntyre

UNIFORM RULES FOR STUDENT CONCESSION TICKETS

Prior to the formation of the Metropolitan Transit Authority, the MMTB had a rule that students travelling on concession tickets should not occupy a tram seat if there was no seat available for a standing adult. When the MTA was formed in 1983, this rule was not made uniform for trains and buses also.

On 18/12/83, we requested the Transport

Ministry to make this rule uniform for trains, trams and buses. The MTA Chairman has advised that this has now been introduced.

It is now up to the MTA to police this rule and to ensure that it is enforced, especially on trains, where ticket checkers and security staff are seen less frequently than Halley's comet.

— Ken McIntyre

SYDNEY v MELBOURNE PUBLIC TRANSPORT FARES

A recent visit to Sydney gave me first-hand experience of Sydney's public transport and I found it still significantly cheaper to use than Melbourne's, even though their fares were last increased in September 1983, only a couple of months before the new fare system was introduced here.

Example of Sydney's bus fares — single trip:

Sections	
1 - 2	40c
3 - 7	80c
8 - 15	\$1.05
16 - 21	\$1.40
22 - 27	\$1.60

Train fares start at a minimum of 45c for short trips (e.g. City Circle), the next stage is 85c (for several kilometres), then \$1.05 etc, up to a maximum of \$2 for the longest train journey within the metropolitan area. Return fares are double the single fare, but are available for return the following day.

These fares may be compared with a minimum of 60c to \$1 for two-hour neighbourhood fares in Melbourne up to a maximum of \$2.50 for single trips crossing two or three neighbourhoods, provided the trip can be accomplished within the time limit.

A more pertinent comparison of fares may be made between Sydney's weekly Travelpass and Melbourne's weekly Travelcard. The Travelpass comes in various types depending on mode of transport and the area covered, but some are available for all three modes, that is train, bus and ferry.

Approximately equivalent weekly tickets are:

Sydney	Melbourne
Red Travelpass \$7.50	Inner Neighbourhood Travelcard \$12.00
Green Travelpass \$9.00	Adjacent Neighbourhood Travelcard \$14.00
Rover Travelpass \$19.00	Anywhere Travelcard \$16.00

As can be seen from the above table, most regular public transport users in Sydney pay a lot less than their Melbourne counterparts. Only in the case of the *Anywhere Travelcard* ("discounted" from \$25) does the Melbourne fare compare favourably with Sydney. Even so, the Green Travelpass is available for seven zones whereas the Adjacent Neighbourhood Travelcard is available for only two neighbourhoods. This means that someone in Melbourne who has to travel daily through three neighbourhoods would need an Anywhere Travelcard whereas their counterpart in Sydney would probably be suited by the much cheaper Green Travelpass unless they were commuting from an outlying district.

Besides those mentioned above, even cheaper Travelpasses are available for use on buses and ferries only.

Yearly tickets still cost the price of 40 weekly tickets in Sydney, but periodicals are not now available in Melbourne, although we have been told that there will be an announcement on these in the new year.

— David Bowd

JUDGE FOR YOURSELF

A survey of wheat handling facilities in the western district was carried out by a disinterested party over the period 27th to 29th December 1983, and the findings reported in the March 1984 issue of *Newsrail* in *Bumper Wheat Harvest*.

Pertinent extracts of those observations are reproduced below, for the following towns:

Dunolly:

"Streets near the yard were filled with growers' and contract carters' trucks and semi-trailers".

Sutherland (Donald):

"A very long queue of road trucks waited to discharge".

Charlton:

"Stretching away from the silo approach road for more than a kilometre was a queue of 47 road trucks." The silo had operated from 7.00am to 12.00 noon that day and for a similar period the previous day. There was an enormous grain bunker under construction.

Wycheproof:

"A truck queue stretching from the weighbridge, through the yard, and down the Burchip road for nigh on 1½ kilometres. We counted 75 trucks in the queue.... The drivers had equipped themselves for the long wait by bringing along folding chairs and lunch boxes."

Dumosa, Nullawill, and Culgoa:

"Silos not operating that day, but had queues of trucks waiting for tomorrow."

Sea Lake:

"Silo was closed . . . a truck queue was being formed for the next day."

Ouyen:

"Growers' trucks choked the silo approaches".

Galah:

"Several growers' trucks waited at the silo".

Pachewollock:

"Two huge bunkers have been built . . . a line of road trucks stretched east and west from one bunker."

Hopetown:

". . . the inevitable truck queue meandered out the gate and along the road."

Beulah:

". . . a large number of road trucks were lined up . . ."

Warracknabeal:

". . . more than 40 road trucks lined up . . ."

Jeparit:

". . . organized chaos . . ."

Antwerp:

". . . a line of growers' trucks . . ."

Dimboola:

". . . a long line of trucks . . ."

Marmalake:

". . . trucks lining three approach roads."

It is worth noting that the Grain Elevators Board — which comes under the Minister of Transport — operated silos between the hours of 9.00am and 5.00pm and sometimes less. Growers complained that at that hour of the morning, grain was still damp, while the early closure of 5.00pm (4.00pm without daylight saving) restricted harvesting times.

— Robin Vowels

OPINION POLL RESULTS

The opinion poll sent out with the last Newsletter produced a cliff-hanger result as shown in the accompanying table.

"Public Transport Association" was the first-past-the-post winner, but "Public Transport Users' Association" came out on top after distribution of preferences. "Public Transport Travellers' Association" was close behind in third position.

In order to ensure an unbiased sample of opinion, the order of names on the voting paper was chosen by a random method. Further, two versions of the paper were prepared having opposite order of names on the list, i.e. names near the top in one case were near the bottom of the list in the other. One of the two versions of the voting paper was enclosed with each Member's Newsletter in alternate fashion.

The returned voting papers were opened and counted by a sub-committee of three Council Members, David Rowd, Parry Gray and Pabio Fovels. The sub-committee met on the 22nd February 1964 when 292 papers were processed and again on 14th March 1964 when another 113 were done.

The trend of voting was similar in both batches but all voting papers were amalgamated and re-counted to produce the final analysis.

The views of Members as expressed in this poll will be of great assistance to the Council in deciding the new name to be recommended for formal adoption at the Annual General Meeting in a few months hence.

Of the 679 voting papers issued, 315 were returned in the five weeks since the Newsletter was sent out, a very pleasing response rate of over 46%. We thank all Members who demonstrated their interest in the future of their Association by participating in this opinion poll.

- David Rowd

	Primary Vote	Distribution of Preferences														Final
		1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	13th	14th	
Public Transport Users' Association	56	57	59	59	63	54	54	69	70	70	77	93	94	144		
Public Transport Association	63	64	64	64	64	68	71	72	78	78	79	90	90	121		
Public Transport Travellers' Association	51	51	51	52	52	52	54	55	55	56	58	71	91	-		
retain the present name	37	35	35	35	35	35	36	36	37	45	51	59	-	-		
Transport Travellers' Association	33	33	33	34	34	34	34	36	37	39	39	-	-	-		
Train, Tram and Bus Users' Association	12	12	12	14	14	16	17	17	17	20	-	-	-	-		
Train Travellers' Assn. (inc. Bus & Tram Travellers)	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	15	-	-	-	-	-		
Campaign for Public Transport	17	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Victorian Association of Public Transport Users	8	8	8	9	10	10	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Australian Public Transit Society	7	7	7	8	8	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
State Public Transport Association	8	8	8	8	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
State Transport Users' Association	4	4	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Metro Transit Users' Association	5	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
State Transport Passengers' Association	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
other names	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
no preference	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	3	6	7	11	12	32	52		
TOTAL	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	315	

DONATIONS

The TTA gratefully acknowledges donations from the following members:

Miss M.L. Carroll
Mr H.G. Draper
Mr L.Z. Dudley
Mr D.M. Ewart
Mr A.R. Gourley
Mr B.W. Grant
Mr G.D. Howells

Dr G.C. Kenny
Mrs F.J. MacKay
Mr M.J. Martin
Mr G.J. Peverell
Mrs M.L. Rogers
Ms C. Worth

DO IT NOW!

Been on an interesting journey lately? Going on one soon? Keep the TTA in mind. Or perhaps you came across an informative rail magazine with news from interstate or overseas? Photographs? What ever it is, it could be of interest to our readers.

Please send it along to the Editor as soon as you can.

TTA MEMBERSHIP

The TTA is a voluntary, non-party political, non-profit organization of public transport users.

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 membership includes regular issues of the Newsletter for the basic subscription of \$5 annually. A concession membership is available for \$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, etc. All members have equal status and their category of membership may be changed 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) at the Presbyterian Assembly Hall, first floor, 156 Collins Street Melbourne at 5.00 pm. (Just a few doors down from Russell Street). Please note that there is a mezzanine floor, and if you use the stairs, be sure to climb two flights.

Other TTA functions include the preparation of briefs and submissions; liaison with railway 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.

NEWSLETTER

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

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

TRAIN TALK

They Still Can't Get Their Act Together

Near South Kensington on the 1.45pm Melbourne to Bendigo on 26 September:

"Good afternoon: Welcome to the Inter-city train to Bendigo. The Buffet car is now open, but there is no tea or coffee owing to a defective tea and coffee-making machine — V/Line apologises." —JRP

Bairnsdale trains ran on a number of days between Christmas and New Year without a buffet car. —JRP

On 7th January, the 4.50pm Albury to Melbourne train — which arrived in Melbourne at 8.50pm — had only the following items available for dinner: beefburgers and sandwiches. For fruit drinks, there was Hobson's choice: just orange juice.

OFFICE-BEARERS FOR 1983-4

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Vice-President

Ivan Powell

Secretary

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Chris McConville

Doreen Parker

Dr Doug Sherman

Robin Vowels

Ray Walford

after hours

TRAIN TALK

Another Upgrade

The MTA was to remove its parcel depot from Flinders Street Station as from 10th February 1984. The MTA announced that it was "transferring the facility to Spencer Street". But as Spencer Street already has parcel facilities, this double talk means that the parcel facility is being deleted altogether.

Obviously a great deal of thought has gone into this exercise — not all trains depart from Spencer Street. And after all, Spencer Street is closer to the shopping hub and passengers in the Elizabeth/Swanston Street area, isn't it.

(Reminiscent of the furphy perpetrated in gold rush days that Melbourne was closer to Ballarat goldfields than Geelong, in order to boost trade through Melbourne.)

The Secret Expansion of Parliament Station

Since Monday 13th February, the northern end of Parliament Station was opened to the public, but without fanfare. The only publicity was a billboard at the southern entrance. Some people might like to know about their \$10 million or thereabouts booking office.