

## Periodicals undermined by Myki

On September 12<sup>th</sup> the government announced changes to various public transport fares, to take effect from January.

While some are welcome – such as changes in regional cities to give town bus passengers the benefit of Monthly tickets, and simplification of rules for students – the changes to metropolitan periodical tickets will discourage some users from public transport.

Weekly, Monthly and Yearly tickets will no longer be valid in both Melbourne zones on weekends. This continues the gradual erosion of benefits to periodical ticketholders, which encouraged public transport use on weekends, when there is generally available capacity on the system.

Originally periodical ticketholders could travel with another adult and children for free, in any zone on weekends, allowing regular commuters to take their family on weekend outings. This was removed in 1992, and replaced by an expensive (currently \$27.20) “Group Traveller” ticket – also now to be abolished from January due to low sales.

Periodical tickets also gained an extra day of validity if first used after 3pm. This benefit was removed in 2005.

And now the extra weekend zone – used by many ticketholders to visit family or tourist attractions on the weekend – will be removed.

### PT’s most loyal customers penalised

Periodical ticket holders are public transport’s most loyal customers. Their tickets are the cheapest and quickest to administer, as a single transaction can allow travel for up to a full year. These are precisely the sort of tickets that the government should be encouraging the use of, and the removal of these benefits appears to be nothing more than an attempt to simplify the fare rules so that the trouble-prone Myki system can be completed.



Other changes to take effect in January include making City Saver tickets only available 10-at-a-time. This effectively makes the cost of an unplanned short trip within the CBD jump from \$2.60 to \$3.50 – the cost of a 2 hour ticket – up 35%.

A plan to make Seniors Daily tickets only available 5-at-a-time (forcing seniors using those tickets to shell out \$16.50 at a time to get their cheapest fare) was reversed after lobbying from the PTUA and an outcry from pensioners in the *Herald Sun*.

### The Myki effect

Myki truly is a case of the tail wagging the dog. How many other “simplifications” at the expense of passengers will we see before this already over-budget late-running system is complete?

We already know that Weekly tickets are to be replaced by a weekly fare cap system, but this will work on a Monday to Sunday basis only, meaning in some cases travel under Myki will cost more than a Weekly ticket bought mid-week.

Taxpayers will pay over a billion dollars for Myki. For that kind of price, perhaps we should have expected that, as the publicity claims, it would give passengers “the best fare”. But it’s obvious that despite the astronomical cost, Myki will be far from perfect.

The government should stop caving to pressure to simplify the fare system for the sake of Myki, and ensure that the current benefits for periodical ticketholders are maintained.

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## Keeping in touch...

### PTUA office

Ross House,  
247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne  
Telephone (03) 9650 7898  
e-mail: [office@ptua.org.au](mailto:office@ptua.org.au)

### Membership Enquiries

Call or e-mail the office (see above)

PTUA members can obtain cheap yearly Metcards – see

[www.ptua.org.au/members/offers](http://www.ptua.org.au/members/offers)

### Internet

Our web site is at [www.ptua.org.au](http://www.ptua.org.au)

The PTUA runs email lists for member discussions, and to stay up to date with PTUA events. Members can also view archived newsletters online:

[www.ptua.org.au/members/resources](http://www.ptua.org.au/members/resources)

## Committee

Daniel Bowen – President  
Tim Petersen – Vice President  
Anthony Morton – Secretary  
Kerryn Wilmot – Treasurer

Phil Bourke  
Mark Johnson  
Jason King  
Rob Meredith  
Bronwen Merner  
David Robertson  
Karl Tracksdorf  
Justine Webse  
Vaughan Williams

### Branch convenors:

Paul Westcott – Geelong  
Jeremy Lunn – Outer East

Committee members can be emailed using the format:  
**firstname.lastname@ptua.org.au**

## Committee Meetings

Meetings are on the fourth Thursday of each month at Ross House. Members are welcome to observe. Please call or e-mail the office for details.

### Branch meetings

#### Outer East:

Third Tuesday of every month, 7pm  
“The Barn” (behind Box Hill Baptist Church)  
3 Ellingworth Parade (off Station St)  
Box Hill

#### Geelong:

First Saturday of every month (except Jan), 10:30am  
Multimedia Room, Courthouse  
Youth Arts Centre  
Corner Gheringhap and Little Malop Streets, Geelong

## PTUA Annual General Meeting – Thursday October 30<sup>th</sup>

The PTUA Annual General Meeting will take place on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> of October at 6:30pm at Ross House: 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne.

The election procedure allows for the AGM to elect a President, Secretary and Treasurer and up to nine ordinary Committee members. Nominations must be on the form

attached below (a photocopy is acceptable) and signed by the nominator and the candidate, both of whom must be current financial members of the PTUA.

Nominations must be received by the PTUA Secretary (Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000) by hand or by mail by 4:00pm on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October.

Nominations will not be called for at the AGM unless nominations received by this closing date are insufficient to fill all positions.

For more details of the AGM, see the insert included with this newsletter.

### PTUA Committee Nomination Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

nominate \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

for election to the position of: President Secretary Treasurer Committee member

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (nominator) \_\_\_\_\_ (candidate) \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ (date)

Copy deadline for the next PTUA news is 15<sup>th</sup> November 2008

Newsletter contributors: Daniel Bowen, Jeremy Lunn, Tony Morton, Paul Westcott.

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## Make these local elections count

This November for the first time, all of Victoria's local councils face elections. Traditionally, these have been a pretty dry affair. Faced with a choice of candidates about whom we generally know little, how often have we voted for someone on little more than the strength of a glib message about getting the rubbish collected on time or fixing more potholes, only to be bitterly disappointed at the calibre of the council that results?

This year could be different, though. High on the list of problems that concern local communities is the strain on daily life that results from high petrol prices along with inadequate and overcrowded public transport. Suburban households find it increasingly difficult to budget for the requisite one car per adult family member, while the alternative is isolation and exclusion. So far our State Government has failed to respond in any meaningful way, except by adopting a back-to-the-50s approach to transport development

and promising yet another addition to the list of two-yearly transport plans that give the appearance of activity while evading the real challenges.

But effective action for change often starts at the local level. In these elections, you will be deciding what position your local council takes on important transport issues, based on the candidates you help to elect. Every candidate will have a position on the key issues, but not all may state this overtly. Does that nice well-dressed, softly-spoken candidate, with the ratepayer-friendly message about clean streets or fiscal rectitude, actually have an unspoken agenda to demolish people's homes for a road tunnel, or to undermine efforts for a suburban rail extension? One never knows, unless the candidates can be drawn into stating their position at the outset, before the votes are cast.

The PTUA intends to shine some light on candidates' positions in these elections. In certain local areas affected by freeway or public

transport proposals, we will be putting the important questions to candidates and publishing scorecards based on the results. Although our volunteers will be unable to cover every council, we want to ensure people can make an informed decision on the major transport questions when they vote in November.

Of course a lot will be up to you, the individual voter. If you're doorknocked by any of the local candidates, make sure you ask them about their support for the decades-overdue rail extension, the bus service in your area, or the new road that threatens you or your friends' homes. Let us know what they say. And if they're fortunate enough to be elected, don't hesitate to remind them of the commitments they may have given you.

Meanwhile, is there a really pressing transport issue in your local area that ought to be on our agenda? Please let us know: email [office@ptua.org.au](mailto:office@ptua.org.au) or phone 9650 7898.

### RIP Ken McIntyre

We note with regret the passing of Ken McIntyre on August 29th.

For many of its early years, Ken was secretary of the PTUA, and its predecessor, the Train Travellers Association. He was instrumental in establishing the PTUA as Victoria's principal advocate for public transport and its patrons.

We extend our sympathies to Ken's family.

#### Tribute

Amongst those who got in touch on the news of Ken's passing was former TTA/PTUA President Charles Sowerine:

*I am so sorry to learn of Ken's death. He was an inspiration. He*

*brought me into what was then the TTA in 1975 and then persuaded me to become president. Together we enlarged the brief and changed the TTA to PTUA. We saved the clocks at Flinders Street Station and the 14 train and tram lines threatened by the Liberal government's Lonie Report. Later, we persuaded the incoming Cain government to move to multi-modal ticketing. Ken was a man of force and character but of deep integrity. I look back on the time when I worked with him as one of the great times of my life.*

*Please pass on to Ken's family my deepest condolences. I share their sorry. We have all lost a voice for a better city and a friend.*



Ken McIntyre in 1987, presenting a PTUA submission on the St Kilda Light Rail to the Ministry of Transport. (Channel 7)

## Premier's transport summit

On the 5th of September the government held a transport summit, with various interest groups invited to give their points of view on transport issues. Treasurer Kerry Wilmot represented the PTUA at the summit, which via a number of discussion groups presented their thoughts on transport issues to the government.

Meanwhile PTUA President Daniel Bowen addressed a rally outside the summit organised by Protectors of Public Lands. Groups represented at the rally included the Greens, Save Holland Park, Yarra Campaign Against the Tunnel, Carlton Residents Association and others – some of whom had not been invited to attend the summit. All were united in calling for the scrapping of the Eddington road tunnel plan, in favour of better public transport,

and a joint resolution was delivered (via government advisers) to the Premier John Brumby.

⇒ [www.savehollandpark.org.au](http://www.savehollandpark.org.au)  
⇒ [www.ycat.org.au](http://www.ycat.org.au)

### Free evening trains

At the summit press conference, the Premier announced they were considering free train services after 8pm. One could be forgiven for thinking that this idea, mirroring the dubious Earlybird scheme already in place, was something the Premier thought up in the car on the way to the summit. It appeared to catch Public Transport Minister Lynne Kosky by surprise.

Ultimately, free rides are a gimmick, not a solution. Train users know that after 7pm, most services fall back to only half-hourly, with no express trains running. On some

lines these trains are already packed – on the Ringwood line, for example, passengers regularly have trouble boarding evening trains.

Given the long waits, slow rides and packed trains, of course most passengers will continue to avoid evening trains, and try instead to squeeze on in peak hour. The real solution to encouraging passengers to move their trips out of peak hours is to boost services – both trains and connecting buses.

Running more frequent train services after the PM peak would make better use of the infrastructure and train fleet we have, relieve overcrowding, cut waiting times, and provide a viable alternative to peak hour. This strategy was used very effectively during the Commonwealth Games, and it could work on a permanent basis.

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## Public Transport Ombudsman – how are they doing?

The PTUA recently met with the board of the Public Transport Ombudsman. The PTO is progressing in improving its complaints-handling procedures,

and is refining its interactions with operators to make the process easier for complainants. We're keen to hear how members have fared with the PTO, in an effort to improve the

way the scheme operates. If you have a story to tell, please contact the office – preferably via email.

⇒ [office@ptua.org.au](mailto:office@ptua.org.au)

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## Making an IMPACT on tram travel times

Members may have noticed Yarra Trams' new promotion "IMPACT" – Independent Melbourne Partners Against Congested Transport.



IMPACT is an industry coalition lobbying on tram and bus priority measures in the government's Keeping Melbourne Moving strategy. Members of the group include the PTUA, the Bus Association of Victoria, RACV, Victorian Taxi Association,

Victorian Transport Association and Bicycle Victoria.

The PTUA is hopeful that its membership will help focus the group's efforts on priority measures that are provably effective – rather than simply pushing expanded clearways, which we continue to oppose.

Some of the biggest delays to trams are due to traffic lights. The congestion strategy includes measures to allow trams to change signals to speed them through intersections, and with so many of the major players in this group, there's a good chance that with our

participation we can finally get some action on traffic light priority.

A study undertaken last year by the PTUA found that while traffic congestion added around 10% to travel times on one tram route, red lights added up to 50%. In many European cities, this wasted time is minimised by allowing trams to trigger a short green phase at signals. This allows trams through intersections quickly without significantly delaying cross traffic or pedestrians.

It is these types of measures we'll be pushing for through our involvement in IMPACT.

⇒ [keepingmelbournemoving.com.au](http://keepingmelbournemoving.com.au)

## Rail to South Morang and Mernda urgent



### Guest column: Darren Peters of the South Morang Rail Alliance

The South Morang Rail Alliance formed in 2005 when several local community groups banded together to keep the State Labor Government accountable for breaking their 1999 and 2002 promise to extend the Epping railway line to South Morang.

Our campaign has found wide ranging support from the community, council, transport experts, opposition parties and the media over a long period of time due to the fact that this obvious community need continues to be the elephant in the corner that the State Government does not want to talk about.

Despite our continual calls for common sense, it seems as though Spring Street sees building our

railway extension to be as difficult as constructing Disneyland at the bottom of Port Phillip Bay! However our extension is not Fantasia: the easement has been there since the Whittlesea line closed in 1959 and a population of 53,000 in the surrounding suburbs is already present to make it financially viable.

In June 2008, Whittlesea Council released its population forecast which showed that the population of the growth suburbs South Morang and Mernda/Doreen will rise from 17,156 in 2006 to 53,106 by 2021.

Current State Government policy shows that the South Morang extension will not be built until 2021 and the Mernda extension will not be built until 2027 (NEITS 2007). Call me crazy, but doesn't this sound like a recipe for traffic congestion chaos?

It is baffling that in this age of global warming and rising fuel costs that new growth corridors are still being constructed without railway lines to enable residents to lessen their carbon footprint.

At this point, I must give credit where credit is due as Minister Kosky has been kind enough to invite us to Parliament to hear our concerns and has offered to come out to South Morang to see the massive population growth first hand. And there are signs that the extension will be brought forward as part the forthcoming transport plan.

Of course the proof will be in the pudding. Anything less than immediate construction to South Morang and the completion to Mernda within the next term of government will be unacceptable to the SMRA and the local community considering it has almost been ten years since Steve Bracks promised in 1999 that they would extend the Epping railway line to South Morang by 2003. It is truly beyond preposterous that we are still waiting for this extension and you can guarantee that residents in the City of Whittlesea will be watching the November transport statement with interest in the lead up to the 2010 state election.

⇒ [www.southmorangrailalliance.org](http://www.southmorangrailalliance.org)

Picture: Leader Newspapers

## Peak hour trams: 1999 vs 2008

The tram network is suffering from increasing numbers of routes experiencing overcrowding, particularly at peak times.

With the PTUA's help, the Sunday Age did a study of the number of peak hour tram services in 1999, comparison with 2008. They found that despite huge patronage growth, most routes had about the same number of trams now as they did when private operation started.

And the results, published in The Sunday Age on 7<sup>th</sup> of September, revealed that some routes actually

have *less* trams each peak hour than they did nine years ago.

- Route 6, AM peak: 2 less
- Route 55, AM peak: 1 less
- Route 57, PM peak: 1 less
- Route 64, AM peak: 3 less
- Route 72, AM peak: 2 less

That most routes have the same number of trams as in 1999 despite continued patronage growth is alarming.

But the fact that some routes now have less tram services is simply astounding, and once again calls



into question whether the government has tight enough control over the privatised public transport network – and why the planning for this growth has been so inadequate.

## Geelong Branch: Bus route reform

The Geelong Branch has finally obtained a copy of the December 2007 report to the Department of Transport by consultants Parsons Brinckerhoff, containing recommendations for reforming Geelong's bus system.

The suggested changes would result in a real improvement to the network, which could scarcely be worse currently. Routes would generally be simpler and more direct, with some new ones added to cover areas presently served by meandering "bus tours". There would also be interchanges between routes in some suburban locations. Unfortunately, most frequencies wouldn't improve significantly, although there would be more services on weekends. Hours of service would be extended,

particularly from Monday to Thursday.

The report doesn't make any recommendation about how buses should operate in the central city. The DoT is currently negotiating a couple of options with the Geelong council. Its preferred alternative, which the Branch supports, is for a bus interchange in Moorabool Street, between Malop and Little Malop Streets. There would be three stops on each side of the street, which wouldn't be reserved for any particular route. Buses would pull in wherever was convenient, and they wouldn't "lay over" there.

Geelong councillors provisionally accepted the DoT's proposal last month but, with council elections looming, they are nervous about the

reaction of Moorabool Street traders to the loss of car parking. Councillors stipulated that each trader in the area affected had to be surveyed before they would give final approval.

On that note, we have been told that at a recent meeting called by City officers to brief traders about the plans, it was apparent that opposition to bus stops in the central area had faded. Since the removal of the central interchange three years ago, shopkeepers have apparently learned from experience that the presence of the stops wasn't the reason for declining trade, and removing them was in fact counter-productive.

⇒ [www.ptua.org.au/geelong](http://www.ptua.org.au/geelong)

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## Ask not what the PTUA can do for you...

Being a non-profit organisation that receives no external funding, the PTUA relies on our members not only for finances, but to run all our activities.

We are compiling a list of members who are prepared to assist with our various activities, even if only occasionally. You don't need to be an expert on public transport, or the PTUA and its policies. However you may have time, skills or contacts which you feel could be put to good use.

Our Office is staffed entirely by volunteer members, so the more helpers we have, the more days we can open and the more we can achieve. Generally our Office volunteers handle mail, email and telephone contacts, and assist people who call in. We also mail out the Newsletter every two months or so, and volunteers to help with that task are always welcome.

The PTUA produces a variety of documents, such as policy papers, media releases and brochures on specific issues, as well as the Newsletter. If you have research, writing or layout skills, you could help in putting some of these publications together. We also encourage members to write to the daily and local papers, and to contact members of parliament, to raise issues related to our concerns.

From time to time we have stalls at community events, and to staff these we need helpers who can contribute some of their time.

In the lead up to elections at all levels of government, we sometimes run campaigns in specific areas of strategic importance, or where there are particular local issues. This might involve letterboxing in the lead up to the election, or handing out how-to-vote cards on the day.

If you are interested in becoming more involved, you could attend Committee meetings as an observer. Committee members are involved in lobbying, letter writing, meeting with stakeholders, and talking to the media. As well, they undertake organisational activities such as setting policy, and planning and organising campaigns.

There are also PTUA branches in Geelong and Melbourne's Outer East, which you can take part in if you live in those areas. For their contact and meeting details, see their pages on the PTUA website or get in touch with the Office.

If you are interested in helping out in any way, please contact the Office to let us know what you might be able to do.

**Office contacts:**  
⇒ [office@ptua.org.au](mailto:office@ptua.org.au)  
⇒ 9650 7898

## Letter to the editor: Notes from a waltzing train

The V/Line trip from Bairnsdale to Traralgon is quite a 'rock and roll' ride. Mind you, nothing like the disconcerting Tango along that section, and especially from Sale eastward in the years before the Kennett government closed the line. It is all in the track bed, this swaying and jolting. No matter how careful the driver might be, they don't control the lines. A mediocre track bed means curvy rail alignment and plenty of carriage dancing. And that makes even reading rather testing. Forget about writing or using a computer.

It might seem no really big deal. At least East Gippsland has a rail service to Melbourne and plenty of people are keen to use it, judging by the heavy bookings for seats. That

is wonderful but why should this part of rural Victoria get what amounts to third rate travel comfort? Why should the eastern end of Victoria not also have the benefit of a FAST train service, which could be the case if the tracks up to something like EU standards with their high quality passenger comfort levels in terms of a smooth ride?

But then we would need first world quality rolling stock, with vehicles on air cushion suspension systems, to say nothing of disabled standard toilets.

Of course there is a slow motion interlude at Stratford when the train idles across the ancient timber bridge at barely 10 Kph while we

gaze at the trickle below which is the Avon River.

Past governments have served regional Victoria most poorly when it comes to energy efficient travel. Billions on roads and peanuts on trains. Now out here in East Gippsland we wait for all the old V/Line train sets to be 'upgraded' but that is not much more than a new paint scheme, old seats recovered and porcelain pans in the toilets. Hardly 'first world' treatment.

PS to V/Line: Add power points at least for all Car A window seats for computer access.

Michael Oxeer, Nicholson

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## Upgraded buses gain patronage

While rumours abound on the government's forthcoming transport plan, figures have shown that bus patronage has been rising dramatically.

Government figures released in August show that bus patronage on Sundays has risen 44% in a year. Patronage on Saturdays was up 15%, and on weekdays up 6%.

Arguably the biggest change to Melbourne's buses in the past decade has been the introduction of evening and Sunday services on a number of routes which didn't previously have them. While most of these services run only hourly, it's clear that where the services are provided, people will use them.

Even more stark is the patronage boost on the recently upgraded Ringwood to Frankston 901 Smartbus which leapt by 58%.

The message here is clear: residents of Melbourne's middle and outer suburbs, beyond the reach of the trains and trams, are looking for public transport options, and where good quality frequent services exist, they will use them.

The PTUA will continue to lobby for fast, frequent services right across Melbourne, to give all of the



city viable sustainable transport options.

⇒ [www.ptua.org.au/campaigns/every10minutes](http://www.ptua.org.au/campaigns/every10minutes)

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## Walk Against Warming – Sat 15<sup>th</sup> Nov

This year the Melbourne Walk Against Warming will be held on Saturday 15th November at 1pm, starting at Federation Square. The dangerous consequences of climate change are already being felt around the world.

Help make this year's walk as big as possible to send a strong message to our governments – ENOUGH TALK, IT'S TIME FOR ACTION.

⇒ [www.walkagainstawarming.org](http://www.walkagainstawarming.org)



# PTUA News

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### Changed your address?

Make sure your PTUA News follows you when you move!  
Cut out or photocopy this form, fill in and return to us at:  
PTUA, Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000.  
Or e-mail us at [office@ptua.org.au](mailto:office@ptua.org.au)

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Responsibility for electoral comment in PTUA News is taken by Vaughan Williams, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne.

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[www.ptua.org.au](http://www.ptua.org.au)

### Join us

If you are reading a friend's newsletter and would like to join and help the fight for better public transport, it's \$25 per year (\$12 concession). Call the office, or see [www.ptua.org.au/join](http://www.ptua.org.au/join)