

# **Melbourne 2030**

Implementation plan 6

*Integrated Transport*

Submission by the Public Transport Users Association

February 2003

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## Executive Summary

The PTUA is very excited about the new direction in public transport that Melbourne 2030 could provide. The background and research presented in the Draft Implementation Plan indicates that this new direction is both desirable and possible.

The PTUA believes that four key points are essential if this change is to come about. They are:

1. Perform integrated planning
2. Expand public transport network
3. Reduce role of road network
4. Provide high quality public transport services

We believe that the Draft Implementation Plan, while excellent as a background paper, is weak in the actual implementation area. To improve it, we recommend changes in the following 4 broad areas:

1. Abandon separate rail, bus, tram and road plans and concentrate on an *integrated plan* instead (regionally based, if appropriate)
2. Enhance the public transport network to include additional fixed rail network expansion options
3. Explicitly remove planned, but not yet constructed freeways from the plan (including the Eastern Ring Road)
4. Include recommended minimum service standards for train, tram and bus services.

## Introduction

The PTUA is very pleased to be offered the opportunity to comment on the implementation plan for the Melbourne 2030 transport strategy.

Overall, we are very pleased with the strategy as produced and believe it offers many useful insights into the strengths and shortcomings of the transport system in Melbourne. We are particularly pleased with the strategic direction that the government has chosen, and in particular with the aim of increasing the mode share of public transport to 20% by the year 2020.

There are a number of key issues raised in the discussion document, and we feel they are worth repeating here as they should form the basis for the implementation plan

CRITICAL	
<b>Time-related</b>	
• route coverage	'taking me where I want to go'
• frequency/span of service	'when I want to go'
• reliability	'with certainty'
• speed	'without unnecessary delays'
• coordination	'with minimum delays when I need to transfer'
<b>Safety</b>	'I need to feel secure'
DESIRABLE	
<b>Information</b>	'I need to know what's going on'
<b>Ticketing</b>	'I expect the system to be easy to use'
<b>Fares</b>	'I expect value for money'
<b>Comfort and convenience</b>	
• crowding	'on longer trips I want a seat'
• cleanliness	'litter and graffiti are a real turn-off'
• courteous staff	'I want someone there if I need help'

The conclusion from this is that significant improvements to PT are needed to attract additional patronage, especially mode shift from private car to PT

It cannot be 'business as usual' for the DoPT.

Building additional road capacity will not reduce road congestion in the medium term. Los Angeles, for example, is struggling to cope with its car based system and huge network of freeways. It is now implementing transit solutions, such as a Bus Rapid Transit, which, by 2008, will comprise 26 bus lines, a 600-kilometre network and 600 stations at a capital cost of \$A450 million, and a planned rail system designed to carry 400,000 people each day. (p7)

The conclusion is that current policies (e.g. *Transporting Melbourne*) that emphasise road construction as a means to reducing congestion, improving mobility and economic performance, are wrong and must be changed.

It cannot be ‘business as usual’ for VicRoads.

If we are to make public transport compete with the private car, it will mean doing the exact opposite of what public transport operators in Melbourne have done over the last fifty years. Rather than giving up in the face of competition, our transport planners must adopt a proactive approach like that of their road planning colleagues. They must anticipate and provide for future growth, while recognising that future growth will require a system planned like the road system, as a single integrated entity offering high levels of service. The benefits of a proactive approach are starting to be seen in Perth, where public transport’s share of travel is on the increase

With these points in mind there are a number of issues with the implementation plan that we would like to discuss, and a number of amendments to suggest.

## 1. Integrated Transport Planning

One concern we have is that although this is supposed to be an Integrated Transport Strategy, it still appears that planning is being done on a modal basis. For example, the strategy envisages separate Bus, Train and Tram plans, as well as separate road plans, rather than one integrated transport strategy.

### **Coordination**

Melbourne has an extensive rail system capable of acting as a high-speed, high-frequency transport backbone. Nonetheless, only about one in ten Melburnians live within walking distance of a railway station. If Melbourne is to achieve anywhere near ‘world’s best’ public transport usage levels of 25 to 50 per cent of all trips, the majority of public transport users will of necessity be multi-modal, using buses and trams to access railway stations as well as to travel locally.

In Melbourne, anything that detracts from multi-modal journeys will detract from public transport use in general. And nothing detracts from multi-modal journeys as much as the lack of coordination between modes. In many places the system is almost comically dysfunctional: buses are scheduled to arrive at stations two minutes after the train leaves; trains running every 15 minutes are ‘met’ by buses running every 20 minutes; bus operators are penalised if they wait an extra few minutes for a late-running train. This is a legacy of a century of Balkanised public transport operations, and it all adds unnecessarily to the waiting time passengers must endure at transfer points.

To rectify the situation requires nothing more or less than *planned timetable coordination between all services at designated interchange points*. This is simple in principle, but is thwarted in practice by bureaucratic inertia and by the institutional chaos that is privatised public transport in Victoria.

Privatisation allows government planners to offload responsibility for service provision onto individual train, tram and bus operators who have no incentive to coordinate their timetables. Operators are instead rewarded for undermining the viability of other public transport modes by running their own parallel services. Commuters from Doncaster and Box Hill North are now ferried all the way into the city by the National Bus Company, where previously they would have taken a bus to Box Hill station and caught the train. The ‘express’ bus journey via the Eastern Freeway takes between 35 and 50 minutes, compared to a potential 25 minutes combined bus/train journey via Box Hill. The arrangement leaves commuters worse off, but generates precious extra revenue for National Bus.

Even when private bus operators themselves seek to improve their services, they are stymied by the bureaucracy. The Ventura Bus Company in 2001 sought to introduce Sunday services on some of its eastern suburban routes, at a cost of some \$1.5 million, but was told by the Department of Infrastructure that there was ‘no budget’ for the extra services. Meanwhile the Department was spending \$17million on

automated signs at selected bus stops (including Ventura's) so that passengers have electronic confirmation of the fact that their bus doesn't run on Sundays.

To unravel this mess doesn't require resuming public ownership of trains, trams and buses (although the services returned to public ownership following the withdrawal of National Express should not be re-privatised). However, it will require resuming public *control*, which is a different thing altogether. What will be needed is a Transport Authority with the power to set timetables for all transport modes, whether publicly or privately operated. The model for this is the *Verkehrsverbund* or 'Transport Community' found in many cities in Germany and central Europe. These are regional transport companies jointly owned by municipal authorities and private investors. The private sector contributes cash and ideas, while democratic accountability is assured by majority public ownership. An example is Zurich's ZVV (*Zurcher Verkehrsverbund*), which coordinates fares, timetables, and funding for the mostly private operators in the Swiss Canton of Zurich.

To implement a ZVV-like Transport Authority in Melbourne will of course require the consent of the private operators, whose franchises are guaranteed by contracts signed with the Kennett Government in 1999. However, securing this cooperation should not prove difficult, given the stringent provisions of these same contracts and the financial difficulties the operators are under.

**Recommendation 1.1**

Delete separate bus, train, tram and road plans for Implementation Plan and undertake integrated planning instead.

**Recommendation 1.2**

Recommend implementation of a *Verkehrsverbund*-like Transport Authority in Melbourne.

## 2. Public Transport Network

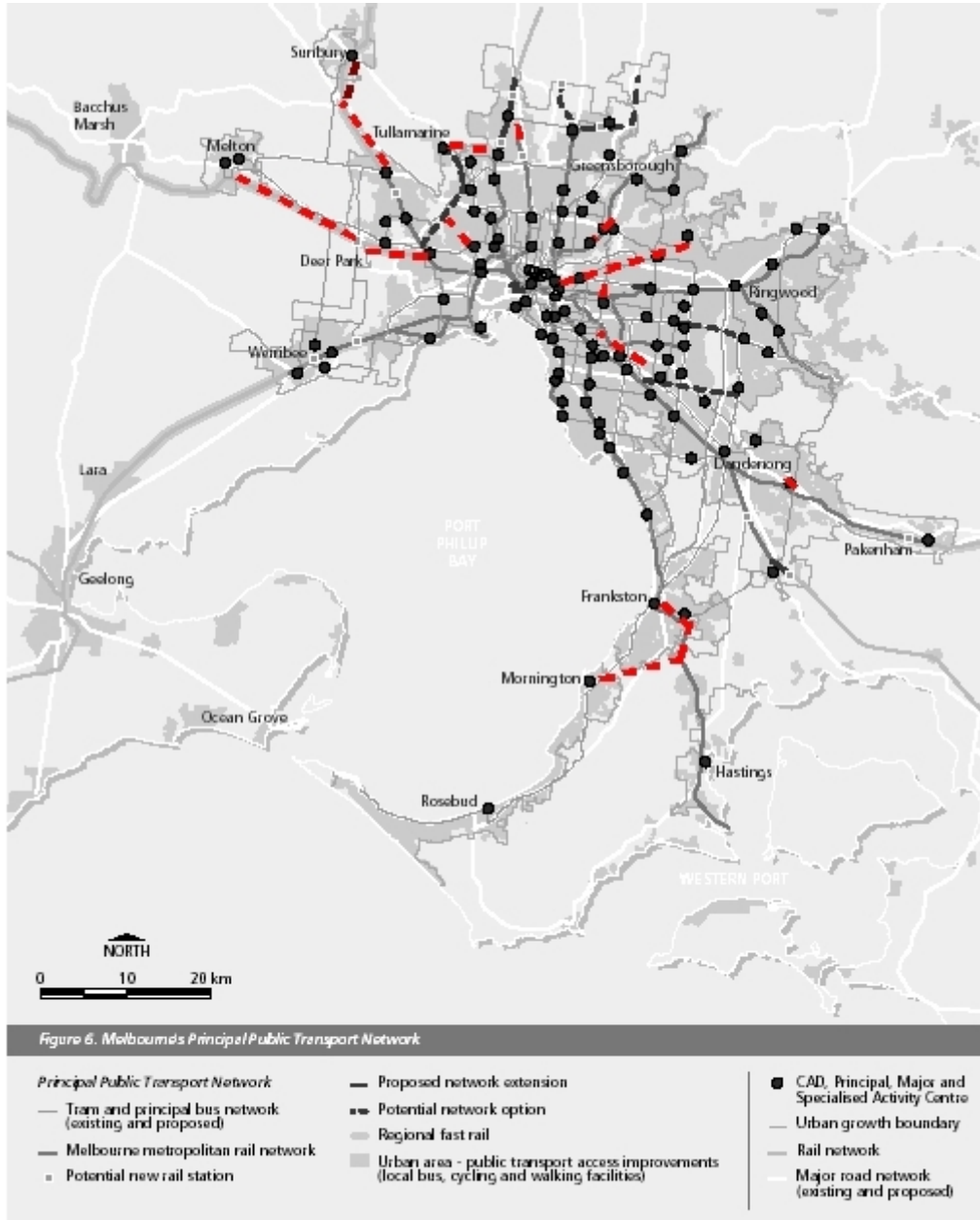


Figure 6 from Implementation Plan reproduced, with major additional PTUA recommendations added

### Spatial coverage

Melbourne has the good fortune to possess one of the largest rail and tram systems in the world. With just one or two exceptions, most areas of the city are within a few kilometres of the system, and few major extensions are required. The focus should be

on smaller alterations to improve connections between modes and access to activity centres.

Our emphasis on fine-tuning existing infrastructure is in keeping with travel statistics presented in policy documents of successive State Governments. Census figures show that transport in Melbourne still follows a predominantly radial pattern. Most trips that are not confined to one's local area are either to or towards the city centre; thus, they are mostly well catered for by the existing network with its radial focus.

Of the trips that are not radial, by far the majority are focussed on isolated 'travel generators' scattered through the suburbs. Some of these places, such as Camberwell and Box Hill, are easily accessible by public transport; others, such as Monash University or Melbourne Airport, are not. This suggests that public transport could meet a large proportion of people's travel needs if a few 'missing links' were to be provided and integrated into the existing network. In many cases, easements are available to provide these missing links.

## ***PPTN***

The PTUA has some concerns with the concept of a "Principal Public Transport Network".

We support the concept of a spine of high capacity rapid transit integrated with high quality local transport services. In the case of Melbourne, the PPTN should consist essentially of the metropolitan train network, plus segregated light rail lines (St. Kilda and Port Melbourne lines). Local services should be of equal quality to the rapid transit services, and operate as local routes as well as feeders to the rapid transit system. Inner and middle suburban routes would also serve the city directly.

We are concerned that the PPTN does not result in entrenchment of public transport "haves and have nots". It is essential that high quality services are also provided to areas that are not on the PPTN.

### **Recommendation 2.1**

Refocus the Principal Public Transport Network to be the fixed rail, rapid transit network

## ***Rail Strategies***

Melbourne's suburban rail network is one of the most comprehensive in the world, but it is not without serious gaps. There are two regions in particular (Doncaster / Templestowe, and south Knox) that now support large populations despite being remote from the rail network. The lack of rail lines in these regions is due to historical accident and has nothing to do with the needs of residents. We propose new rail lines as the high-capacity 'backbones' necessary to serve these regions. Compared with equivalent road projects, these new lines are a bargain.



Ideally, all of Melbourne's key travel generators would be located close to the rail network; no other mode will provide capacity sufficient to serve a significant proportion of trips by public transport. Fortunately, due to Melbourne's history of rail-centred development most of these 'hot spots' are close to railway stations. Among the rest, the most significant are Doncaster Shoppingtown, Monash University and Melbourne Airport. The first two are located on the proposed rail lines to Doncaster and Rowville; the third is a separate project.

In several places minor extensions, new tracks and stations are required on existing lines to cater for residential growth on Melbourne's urban fringe

### **Rowville train line**

This 12-kilometre train extension from Huntingdale station to Stud Park shopping centre in Rowville has a twofold aim: to provide a new high-speed transport backbone for the public transport 'black hole' of Wheelers Hill and south Knox; and to boost public transport capacity to such major destinations as Monash University, Stud Park, the Wellington Business Park, and whatever large development is set to replace Waverley Park.

Stations would be provided at key interchange points and trip generators, at a spacing of roughly 2 kilometres. As an indicative example:

- Huntingdale junction
- Clayton North (west side of Clayton Road)
- Monash University (opposite bus loop)
- Mulgrave (corner Wellington and Springvale Roads)
- Wheelers Hill (between Brandon Park Drive and Jells Road)
- Kingston Links (corner of Corporate Avenue)
- Rowville Stud Park (in Stud Park shopping centre)

Trains would run from Rowville direct to the City every 10 minutes, with an express running pattern complementary to those on the Pakenham and Cranbourne lines.

Because these three routes between them cover all stations, these express patterns could apply throughout the day, not just in peak hours.

The PTUA does not support "light rail" as an option for this corridor, as capacity would be insufficient for demand.

#### **Recommendation 2.2**

Explicitly include suburban train extension to Rowville.

### **East Doncaster train line**

The orchards of Doncaster and Templestowe have since the 1960s given way to contiguous suburban development in the broad ‘green wedge’ between the Eltham and Ringwood train lines. The filling of the corresponding gap in the rail network is long overdue.

The East Doncaster railway traces its ancestry back to 1929, and like the Rowville line was one of the key rail proposals in the 1969 transport plan destined to gather dust over the next three decades. Our updated proposal is for a railway to branch off the existing line north of Victoria Park station, run along the Eastern Freeway median as far as Bulleen (which was made especially wide so as to accommodate a railway), then run underground to Doncaster Shoppingtown and on to East Doncaster. The total length of tunnel would be approximately 5km.

Stations could be provided in the following locations:

- Royal Talbot (Eastern Fwy and Chandler Hwy)
- Belford (Eastern Fwy and Belford Road)
- Yarra Flats (Eastern Fwy and Burke Road)
- Bulleen (Eastern Fwy and Bulleen Road / Thompsons Road, east side)
- Morning Star (near corner of High Street and Village Avenue)
- Shoppingtown (in Doncaster Shoppingtown centre)
- Waldau (near corner of Doncaster Road and Wetherby Road)
- East Doncaster (near corner of Blackburn Road and George Street)

This train line proposal is an alternative to the inward extension of the Eastern Freeway through Fitzroy and Carlton. The latter is expected to cost \$600 million (twice as much as the railway) and is unlikely to do much for inner-city traffic congestion as most Eastern Freeway traffic is headed for the city centre. Our proposed rail line would instead provide welcome relief for Doncaster commuters who find themselves in longer and longer traffic jams on the Eastern Freeway following its progressive extension from Doncaster to Ringwood.

#### **Recommendation 2.3**

Explicitly include suburban train extension to East Doncaster.

### **Airport train extension**

The most convenient and economical solution for public transport access to Melbourne Airport is an extension of the regular suburban train service to Broadmeadows. The extension would be in a cutting along an existing easement under the flight path, to a station located in the basement of the terminal building.

Services would operate with standard suburban train frequencies and hours of operation (with the last departure scheduled after the arrival of the latest flight), with the Airport station in Met Zone 3.

This fairly modest airport link proposal shares none of the disadvantages that have led to the failure of airport rail links in Sydney and Brisbane, and led the Victorian government to (quite rightly) scrap a proposal for a rail link modelled on these two. The reason for the failure of these systems is an over-reliance on expensive technology to provide a luxury service for a select few, rather than a conventional service for the average traveller. Thus our proposal calls for no additional dedicated tracks, special rolling stock, tunnels through swampland, or exorbitant fares. And as it is nothing but an extension to an existing service, it should satisfy the concerns about high-speed trains in residential areas felt by residents along the Broadmeadows line.

Between Broadmeadows and North Melbourne an alternating pattern of express running similar to the Northern Suburbs line in Perth should be considered, to permit a speedy journey from the Airport to the City comparable with a drive along Citylink. One option is to alternate between Broadmeadows–Essendon non-stop and Essendon–North Melbourne non-stop. Following electrification to Craigieburn, the Craigieburn trains would have one express pattern and Airport trains another, with common stops at Broadmeadows, Essendon and North Melbourne.

#### **Recommendation 2.4**

Explicitly include *suburban* train extension to Airport .

#### **Other train extensions: anticipating the growth**

The history of Melbourne shows that the undesirable consequences of ‘urban sprawl’ can be mitigated (if not exactly avoided) when suburban development occurs in a planned manner, on a ‘corridors-and-wedges’ or similar scheme that preserves open space, and includes public transport services from the very beginning so as not to entrench suburban car dependence. [Pat Troi / Moriarty reference here?]

There are a number of places where suburban development has outrun, or threatens to outrun, the suburban train network by short distances. Other fringe suburbs have rail services already, but these services are hampered by inadequate track and station infrastructure. In all these areas, small network extensions, electrifications and other improvements would have disproportionate benefits.

1. Continue electrification from Sydenham to Sunbury
2. Electrify Broadmeadows to Craigieburn
3. Extend Epping line to South Morang
4. Duplicate and Electrify Frankston to Leawarra
5. Duplicate and Electrify Leawarra to Mornington
6. Duplicate and Electrify Sunshine to Melton
7. Duplicate single-track sections on Hurstbridge line
8. New station at Eltham North (Allendale Road)
9. Duplicate Mooroolbark to Lilydale

10. New station at Cave Hill (Mooroolbark Road)
11. Duplicate Upper Ferntree Gully to Belgrave
12. Reroute Pakenham line through Fountain Gate Shop Ctr
13. New station and bus interchange at Hampton Park
14. New station and bus interchange at Southland Shop Ctr
15. Duplicate Dandenong to Cranbourne
16. New station and bus interchange at Newport West
17. Reconfigure stations on Alamein line

The extension from Epping to South Morang, already committed, will help boost public transport access to new subdivisions in Mill Park and South Morang. Further extensions along the route of the former Whittlesea railway should occur in line with the development of the Plenty Valley.

As in other parts of Melbourne bus networks in the vicinity of new railway stations should be reorganised to feed into these stations and coordinate with trains.

#### **Recommendation 2.5**

Explicitly include additional suburban train extensions.

### **Trams**

Melbourne's iconic tram network functions well and is popular with travellers. However, it also suffers from some minor deficiencies, in particular the historical legacy of lines that terminate a mile from train stations and major trip generators. Short, inexpensive extensions of these lines would render the network much more effective as a feeder to the rail backbone. Other short extensions would cater for cross-suburban journeys, such as Caulfield to Camberwell.

Trams have a carrying capacity intermediate between heavy rail and buses, and can therefore serve as access modes to 'hot spots' where rail extensions are difficult or not otherwise warranted. The extension of the Mont Albert tram line to the Box Hill District Centre is a good example of a useful (if extravagantly executed) tram extension. For the first time, residents of suburbs such as Balwyn and Mont Albert North have convenient public transport access not only to the Box Hill shops, but also to eastern suburban train services. Likewise, these suburbs are now more accessible by public transport from other parts of Melbourne.

The PTUA has identified 10 other similar projects that should be included in the Implementation Plan

1. Extend 75 East Burwood to Knox City
2. Extend 57 West Maribyrnong to East Keilor
3. Extend 48 North Balwyn to Doncaster Shoppingtown
4. Extend 8 Toorak to Hartwell (serving two rail lines and Coles Myer headquarters)
5. Extend 69 Kew Cotham Rd to Kew Junction
6. Extend 72 Camberwell to North Kew (Yarra Flats RS) and Ivanhoe RS (via Lwr H'berg Rd)

7. Extend Burke Road track south to Caulfield RS
8. Extend 3 East Malvern to East Malvern RS. Further extension to Chadstone shopping centre
9. Extend 67 Carnegie to Carnegie RS
10. Extend 6 Glen Iris to Ashburton RS

The proposed extensions to Doncaster Shoppingtown and to North Kew would both coordinate with the proposed East Doncaster railway, but have clear merits in their own right.

### **Recommendation 2.6**

Explicitly include package of tram extensions.

## **Buses**

Unlike the train and tram networks, Melbourne's bus network is utterly dysfunctional. The Melbourne bus map depicts a tangled web of routes that meander through back streets, undertake tortuous diversions and still manage to leave entire residential areas unserved. Circuitous routes add to running times, and cause bus journeys to take three times as long as an equivalent journey by car. The original intent may have been to have a single bus route link all possible origins and destinations within an entire suburb, but poor bus patronage proves that this is poor policy. This is because meandering routes make bus travel little faster than walking, reduce revenue collection per hour of bus running time, do not permit frequent service, and make the route structure difficult for passengers to understand.

As in Toronto, Melbourne's road network is organised on a grid layout, which can form an easy-to-understand basis for its bus routes. The key routes should, like trams, adhere to the arterial road grid and coordinate with trains at stations where the railways intersect the grid. In this way they can combine the vital feeder function with effective cross-suburban transport. The very few Melbourne bus routes that already approximate this model (such as the 630 along North Road and the 703 along Blackburn Road) are also the routes that attract reasonable patronage (if still low by world standards).

Of course, many suburban journeys are not conveniently aligned with the arterial road grid. Because of the diversity of trip origins and destinations, it is not possible to have a single bus route service all possible journeys. Toronto makes extensive use of bus-to-bus transfers to link a wider range of locations. Bus stops at major road intersections are located close to each other to make such transfers easier, and buses will often stop on both sides of wide intersections so that transferring passengers do not have to cross the road. High frequencies (akin to trams in Melbourne) ensure that one doesn't have to wait long for the next bus.

In Melbourne, bus-to-bus transfers are made difficult by low service frequencies, tortuous routes, and lack of timetable coordination. Bus stops are located to minimise inconvenience to motorists, rather than to make transfers easier. As with bus-train

transfers, the solution lies with a high-level Transport Authority that determines service frequencies, routes, and the location of stops.

The simplified, coordinated bus network should extend into all built-up areas of Melbourne. In new residential subdivisions, bus services should be provided before residents move in, not a year later when car use has already become entrenched. The network should be operated with state-of-the-art low-floor buses, supplemented with smaller midi-buses on lower-capacity local routes. Cleaner fuels such as natural gas or ethanol should be considered as substitutes for diesel.

**Recommendation 2.7**

Explicitly include review of suburban bus network in all areas, with view to improving coverage, route simplicity and service frequencies.

### 3. Reduce the role of the road network

The Implementation Plan clearly articulates that **building additional road capacity will not reduce road congestion in the medium term**. The PTUA wholeheartedly agrees with this statement. Yet the Plan still explicitly recommends additional road capacity for regional connections (p23) and implicitly recommends additional urban freeways (e.g figure 2 which includes Merri Creek and Scoresby Freeways). These are unacceptable and must be removed from the Implementation plan.

#### **Recommendation 3.1**

Explicitly delete new freeway projects, including Scoresby, Merri Creek and Dingley Freeways.

#### **Recommendation 3.2**

Delete “Complete high standard road links to provincial cities” action item

## 4. Public Transport Service Standards

### Temporal coverage

The most comprehensive public transport network in the world is of no use if it leaves people stranded in the evenings or on weekends. Twenty-first century lifestyles are not restricted to the hours of 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. That era when Melburnians stayed home every night, when Melbourne stopped completely on Sundays and became a city fit for making a film about the end of the world, is well behind us and unlikely to return. Today's Melbourne is a 24-hour, 7-day city and needs a 24-hour, 7-day service.

A good start would be having buses adhere to the same hours of operation as trams. Currently even inner-city buses cease operating at 6pm while the tram routes they intersect operate until after midnight.

Night services, too, are vital to high-quality public transport. All successful public transport systems provide round-the-clock services. New York and Chicago run trains 24 hours a day on major routes, while London and Sydney use buses to provide after-midnight services. Perth's trains run until 2 or 3am on Friday and Saturday nights, and in Brisbane buses run until around 1am seven days a week. Toronto's trains, trams and buses operate at normal frequencies until around 1:45 am, when a more limited network of 22 tram and bus routes takes over, operating every 8 to 30 minutes until dawn.

Melbourne should be no different. The Nightrider bus service was a positive step when it was introduced in 1993 (following a suggestion by the PTUA) but much more is needed. All but the quieter Melbourne train, tram and bus services should operate—at normal frequencies—until around 2am, with a more limited half-hourly tram and bus network continuing until 5am. Routes serving major nightlife centres such as St Kilda, Fitzroy and Southbank would run more frequently. This will ensure that public transport is an option for late-night travellers and entertainment seekers.

#### **Recommendation 4.1**

Recommend increased hours of operation, including after midnight services, for all metropolitan areas.

### High Frequency = Shorter waiting times

The most common complaint about public transport goes something like: “I arrived at the tram/bus/train stop and nothing turned up for half an hour; I could have driven home in less time than that!” The importance of waiting time cannot be overstated: transport experts have observed that commuters perceive time spent waiting to have up to six times the value of time spent inside the vehicle.

Waiting time is determined primarily by service frequency. In Melbourne, frequencies are usually unattractive, especially outside peak hour, although some



improvements have been made in recent years. Passengers can wait 30 or even 60 minutes between trains, while tram passengers often wait 20 minutes. Buses are even worse.

Sometimes, passengers can reduce waiting by using timetables, but most of us have no control over factors like the time a movie or doctor's appointment finishes, or how long the shopping takes, so a timetable is often useless. Nor do people like having their lives run by timetables.

How often should services run? Clearly, the time people will wait depends on the length of the journey. Most passengers would endure a ten-minute wait to travel 58 kilometres from Melbourne to Pakenham but not to go three blocks up Bourke Street.

Services catering for short distance travel should have shorter headways (time between vehicles) and vice versa. This is not to say that outer suburban services should have the longest headways: Frankston might be a long way from the city, but Frankston trains also serve shorter trips like Carrum to Frankston, which call for shorter waiting times.

How short is 'short' and how long is 'long'? Some assistance can be gained by looking at successful public transport systems. Toronto's subway trains run every six minutes or better, even at 1am. Vancouver runs rail services at five-minute frequencies, and Montreal at eight-minute frequencies.

A study of customers at banks and government offices in Melbourne showed most people were only prepared to wait six minutes before becoming frustrated. For short public transport trips, nobody should be kept waiting longer than this. Furthermore, people's tolerance of delay does not increase at night or on Sundays.

We advocate a basic 10-minute frequency for all services, reducing to 15 minutes in the late evening.

#### **Recommendation 4.2**

Included recommended minimum service frequencies

### **A Ticketing System Serving Passengers, and Not Vice Versa**

Ms Downing says she drives because it's the more convenient option. If she travelled by public transport she would have to buy a ticket for zones one, two and three, which would cost \$11 a day. She doesn't feel safe on public transport after hours and sometimes she does shift work.

—*The Sunday Age*, 7 April 2002

The privatisation of public transport in Melbourne does not appear to have changed the entrenched passenger-hating mentality of transport operators. The view seems to be that passengers should conform to the requirements of operators, not that operators should serve passengers. This attitude may work for banks, but not for businesses that rely on the goodwill of their customers for patronage.

## **Ticketing as if People Mattered**

Apart from limited running times and poor service frequencies, the ticketing system is the most obviously dysfunctional aspect of Melbourne's public transport. Tram passengers, who were served by conductors as recently as the late 1990s, must now buy their tickets from oversized machines that do not take notes. The machines at railway stations, that take notes but will not issue more than \$10 in change, are frequently vandalised or malfunctioning, and will swallow one's money without warning. Travellers frustrated by the ticket machines are directed to distant retail outlets that are closed mornings and evenings and do not sell the full range of tickets anyway. Passengers must revalidate their tickets every time they board a tram, for no better reason than that it gives the bean counters some unreliable statistics to work with. And if a ticket gets lost or damaged in the machine, the holder must negotiate a Byzantine nightmare of forms and red tape before any refund is paid.

The legacy of this broken system, which cost the Kennett Government \$400 million to implement, is a record rate of fare evasion, estimated at 10% on the system as a whole and up to 40% on the tram system. Rather than acknowledge the role of the despised ticketing system in the high rate of fare cheating, the government and operators prefer to blame it on some peculiar disease that afflicts Melbourne public transport users and no-one else. It doesn't help that Onelink, the operator of the ticketing system, has its own contract with the government under which it has no obligation to fix the problems.

If a ticketing system is to be convenient to passengers and foil fare evasion, it must *make it as easy as practicable to buy a ticket, and as difficult as practicable to avoid buying one*. The current system is the precise opposite: it makes purchasing tickets difficult, and makes fare evasion simple by comparison.

The government and operators have learned the hard way that the only option for fighting fare evasion, especially on trams, is with a visible staff presence. Not so long ago, this presence on trams was furnished by conductors, who not only made sure everyone had a ticket but also assisted with directions, helped passengers with mobility problems or with prams, and maintained a safe, secure travelling environment.

Now, the only staff encountered by tram passengers are poorly-trained ticket inspectors, who travel the system in packs and have no duties beyond chasing down fare evaders. Similarly, ticket sellers and other railway staff have been replaced by security guards with no responsibility to assist passengers. The number of hired thugs required under the 'no-staff' policy is rapidly approaching the number of (friendly) conductors and station staff that used to exist. Their disregard for the law is coming home to roost with passengers successfully challenging fines in court, but it is still not very customer friendly to make passengers who have done nothing wrong waste all this time.

Fixing the Metcard system will require a two-pronged approach .

- On the one hand, the more ridiculous aspects of the automatic ticketing system must be remedied such as removing the requirement to revalidate an already valid ticket.
- On the other hand, a staff presence must be reestablished alongside the ticket machines. This is the norm in other cities around the world with automated ticketing—including Sydney, London, Hong Kong, and Brussels (which uses almost identical machines).

There is a clear need, and overwhelming public support, for the return of conductors on trams. Together with service staff at stations, they would perform their traditional functions (see below), and would also help issue the full range of Metcard tickets. Station staff would help safeguard revenue by monitoring ticket barriers, which are open to abuse when no staff are present.

**Recommendation 4.3**

Recognise importance of staff in providing customer service, security and ticketing functions. Recommend the provision of staff in any future ticketing system.

## Supported Initiatives

To date, we have discussed and made recommendations in areas where the PTUA disagrees with the direction or focus of the Implementation Plan. There are however, many initiatives with which we agree. For completeness, they are summarised here:

**Action 2: Encourage sustainable travel**

**Action 3: Provide for the transport needs of growth areas**

**Action 4: Provide for freight and commercial transport.** (Note that the PTUA *does not support* the Eastern Ring Road as part of a freight strategy)

**Action 5: (part) Completion of fast rail links and reopening of country rail lines.** (The PTUA would recommend this list be extended and adequate services provided)

**Action 6 (part) Ensure integrated planning for metropolitan transport.** (The PTUA *does not support* the development of a separate road plan, as discussed above)

## Conclusion

Melbourne 2030 provides an opportunity to change the direction of transport planning in Victoria from an unsustainable road/private car based system to a sustainable public transport based system. The majority of people surveyed as part of the Metropolitan Strategy planning process support this.

The transport and accessibility topic area was the most popular during Round 2 of consultation and almost 33 per cent of forum participants were involved in discussions. Strong support was recorded for initiatives to reduce or improve car usage, and increase the service levels of public transport. Initiatives to encourage walking and cycling to work also drew general support from participants. The participants in support of more roads and freeways were in the minority.

—Metropolitan Strategy Information Bulletin, November 2001

The Implementation Plan supports this desire to a great degree. However, there are a number of points where the Plan is weak and requires strengthening.

In particular, the PTUA believes that a stronger emphasis on integrated transport is needed, additional public transport network expansions included and a number of counter-productive road projects deleted.

Further details of PTUA policies can be found in our publication “It’s time to Move”, available from the Association.

## Summary of Recommendations

The following are recommended changes to the Implementation Plan

### 1. Integrated Transport Planning

#### Recommendation 1.1

Delete separate bus, train, tram and road plans for Implementation Plan and undertake integrated planning instead.

#### Recommendation 1.2

Recommend implementation of a *Verkehrsverbund*-like Transport Authority in Melbourne.

### 2. Enhancing the Public Transport Network

#### Recommendation 2.1

Refocus the Principal Public Transport Network to be the fixed rail, rapid transit network

#### Recommendation 2.2

Explicitly include suburban train extension to Rowville.

#### Recommendation 2.3

Explicitly include suburban train extension to East Doncaster.

#### Recommendation 2.4

Explicitly include *suburban* train extension to Airport .

#### Recommendation 2.5

Explicitly include additional suburban train extensions.

#### Recommendation 2.6

Explicitly include package of tram extensions.

#### Recommendation 2.7

Explicitly include review of suburban bus network in all areas, with view to improving coverage, route simplicity and service frequencies.

### 3. Reducing the role of the road network

#### Recommendation 3.1

Explicitly delete Scoresby, Merri Creek and Dingley Freeways from Implementation Plan.

**Recommendation 3.2**

Delete “Complete high standard road links to provincial cities” action item

**4. Improving Public Transport Services**

**Recommendation 4.1**

Recommend increased hours of operation.

**Recommendation 4.2**

Included recommended minimum service frequencies

**Recommendation 4.3**

Recognise importance of staff in providing customer service, security and ticketing functions. Recommend the provision of staff in any future ticketing system.