

Solving Melbourne's transport crisis

A C O M M U N I T Y M E E T I N G

State must change track as commuters vote with their feet

FRIDAY, JULY 27, 2007 • THE AGE



TRAIN operators have announced two patronage records that confirm what every commuter knows: the system is stretched to its limits. It is reported that the network exceeded passenger load capacity last year, with the result of overcrowding and long queues left standing — or sitting. Patronage records were recorded in May, with the system recording a 10 per cent increase in passenger numbers.

A commuter from the 1950s would be shocked to see how little the train network has grown. Back then public transport took priority over cars.

dominated culture as year after year road funding greatly exceeded capital spending on public transport.

Once oil prices began to soar to the current levels, it was inevitable that road transport would become the dominant mode of transport.

Most of the \$2.9 billion for rail was in its later years. The Government has since brought forward some elements: the purchase of new trains, refurbishment of others, training of drivers and replacement of 30-year-old control systems.

are needed now, especially as commuters face paying even more for petrol if the oil price hits \$US100 a barrel as some analysts predict.

Two years ago *The Age* argued the time had come to bite the bullet and divert funding from road transport to rail.

Blowout in overcrowded trains

EXCLUSIVE

boom in patronage in Melbourne's middle and outer suburbs. Across the network, patronage has climbed by 18 per cent in two years, with growth expected to continue.

Bureau of Statistics figures released on Tuesday show Melbourne has the population growth of any Australian city between 2001 and 2006, with an increase of 273,000.

2001 2004 2007

LINES THAT EXCEED PASSENGER LIMITS



THURSDAY, JULY 26, 2007 • THE AGE

The purchase of 10 new trains has also been brought forward and plans are under way to refurbish the 30-year-old Hitachi fleet.

Passenger growth in Melbourne's east remains just above previously projected figures. The Belgrave, Lilydale and Glen Waverley lines have all recorded less than 5 per cent growth in the 12 months to May.

The Government has plans to add extra tracks on the Sydenham line.

But the infrastructure improvements are medium to long-term solutions, meaning the commuter crush will continue.

In October, a new suburban timetable will be introduced which includes an additional 39 services every weekday.

Public Transport Users Association president Daniel Bowen said it was obvious the rail system had been neglected. "There's been no substantial increase in the fleet in decades and there's been virtually no changes to the timetable since 1999," Mr Bowen said.

"We are running less trains in peak hour than we did in the 1980s."

Thursday 30 August
5.30pm for 6.00-8.00pm

Supper Room
Melbourne Town Hall

Speakers include:

Evidence based transport planning

Dr Paul Mees, Senior lecturer in Transport and Land Use Planning, University of Melbourne and author of *Melbourne's Future Transport Options*, (MCC, 2005)

Implications of global warming and peak oil for transport

Cr Janet Rice, Chair, Metropolitan Transport Forum, Councillor and former Mayor, City of Maribyrnong

Transport funding – myth and reality

Peter Fitzgerald, Infrastructure expert and author of *Review of Partnerships Victoria Provided Infrastructure*, (Vic Gov, 2004)

Where to from here?

Cr Janet Rice,
Metropolitan Transport Forum
Angela Munro,
Citizens for a Liveable Melbourne

Organised by the **Metropolitan Transport Forum** with **Citizens for a Liveable Melbourne** in association with the Municipal Association of Victoria, Victorian Local Governance Association, Blue Wedges, Friends of the Earth, Green Wedges Coalition, PTUA, Institute for Sensible Transport, Koonung/Mullum Forestway Association, Protectors of Public Lands Victoria, Western Region Environment Centre and Environment Victoria.

RSVP

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