

250 Passengers Stranded

Private Bus Operator 'Forgets' Service Obligation

The *Herald Sun* of 12 May reports strange goings-on at AFL Park, Waverley. Lack of high quality public transport has always been one of the problems making this venue less than popular with football fans, but things reached a new low on the evening of Saturday, 10 May.

If anything was needed to warn Melbourne public transport users about the prospective delights of privatised transport, this catastrophe was it. The quality of transport to Waverley Park had already taken a dive when the Kennett Government, soon after coming into power, decided the Met would no longer run services to cater for football patrons. In classic Melbourne fashion the AFL management wasn't interested in the patrons who didn't come by car. As a result, the service is currently shared between two of the private bus operators who will take us into the brave new world of privatisation, and one of them 'forgot' on 10 May.

Grenda's Bus Services was contracted to run the service, but when the *Herald Sun* went to press Grenda's was "not available for comment." Two hundred and fifty passengers (including Port Adelaide fans from interstate) were stranded at Glen Waverley station and did not reach the grounds until half time.

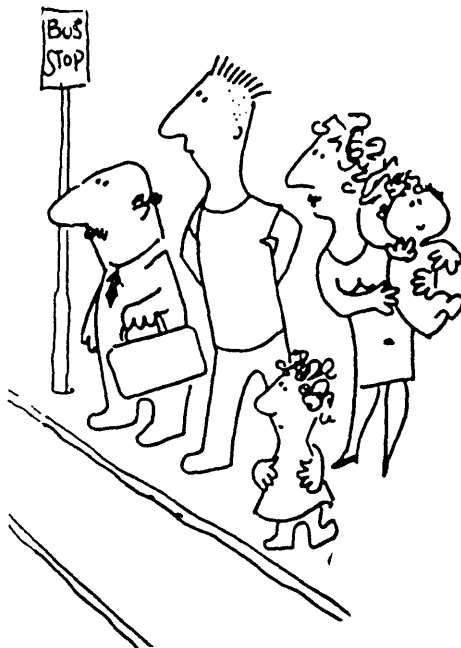
The bus sector, historically, has always been the weak link in Melbourne's public transport, since one-man bus operations

started to appear after World War I. We know that many middle and outer suburbs rely on buses for public transport, yet we also know that enterprise and high service standards have hardly ever been associated with Melbourne bus operators. Unfortunately in the brave new world envisaged by the Government's privatisation plan, the bus companies are expected to go out and 'round up those new passengers' as individual entities.

Already we are seeing the National Bus Company focus on poaching passengers from Met rail services on the Ringwood line, as much as going after those many prospective passengers trapped in their cars in the Doncaster corridor. Any arrangement the Government has for the bus companies will only work if the companies are encouraged to cooperate with each other, and with the train and tram companies, to provide a 'seamless' service—much as the Met would do today with proper, committed management.

The new stadium planned for the Docklands will at least be alongside Spencer Street station, forming an ideal target for high public transport priority and with easy access to the whole public transport system. Will our prospective private-enterprise public transport

operators be able to rise to the challenge and provide a high frequency integrated service for the matches and events or (as in the past) defer to the car?



John McPherson

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Scoresby Campaign Forges Ahead

The PTUA's campaign for environment-friendly transport alternatives to the Scoresby Freeway is continuing apace.

On 30 April we were present at a public meeting at Montsalvat, called by the Anti Ring Road Organisation to oppose the construction of the 'missing link' of the Eastern Ring Road through the Yarra Valley 'Green Wedge'. Around two hundred people were present at the meeting, which was addressed by Melbourne University senior lecturer Nick Low, former Melbourne Lord Mayor Trevor Huggard, and British anti-freeway activist Jason Torrance. The meeting unanimously called on Nillumbik and Manningham councils to "vigorously oppose the construction of the Ring Road freeway through the Green Wedge" and to support public transport alternatives.

The PTUA has been strenuously lobbying the City of Greater Dandenong to withdraw from the Eastern Ring Road Steering Committee, a pro-freeway propaganda body established by former commissioners in the region and funded by unconsulted ratepayers. Dandenong plays a key role in providing administrative support to this Committee. We oppose this on the grounds that better public transport is the best economic option for Dandenong, and that building the Scoresby Freeway will ultimately suck investment out of the heart of Dandenong and into dispersed locations along the freeway.

In partial recognition of this, the Greater Dandenong council recently voted to conduct further surveys and hold discussions prior to giving a firm commitment to the Scoresby Freeway.

In particular they voted to "seek feedback from residents and ratepayers ...as to their regional transport priorities." Of course, it is our contention that when citizens are consulted on their transport needs, as in Vancouver not so long ago, the consensus is generally toward better public transport rather than more roads. The Dandenong motion was passed by all councillors with the exception of Mayor Greg Harris and Councillors Sharon Harris and John Kelly. Cr Kelly has since told the *Oakleigh Springvale Dandenong Times* (7/5) that he is "absolutely disgusted" that the Council may actually consult with the community before committing itself to a new freeway!

Meanwhile, the City of Knox has announced a forthcoming Transport Summit in which a broad range of regional transport issues will be discussed. Outer East residents are strongly urged to attend and make their views heard. Contact the Knox Environment Society on 9763 7017 for further details.

The Shire of Nillumbik is seeking representatives from all wards, and other interested parties and experts, to become involved in a transport consultation process. If you live in the Eltham or Warrandyte area, this is *your* chance to become involved in the campaign for better public transport. For more details contact the Anti Ring Road Organisation on 9844 3454.

The PTUA is seeking more volunteers to become involved in the Outer East campaign. Those interested should call the PTUA office on 9650 7898, or express their concerns to their local council.

Scoresby Rail Option Remains?

The Department of Infrastructure claims it is still considering the option of an eight-kilometre rail extension from Glen Waverley to Rowville, according to the *Knox News* and *Monash Post* of 20 May.

Scoresby Corridor Environmental Effects Statement (EES) manager Rob Aitken says claims that the rail link had been dropped as an option were "basically incorrect...[We] are making every effort to confirm it is an option."

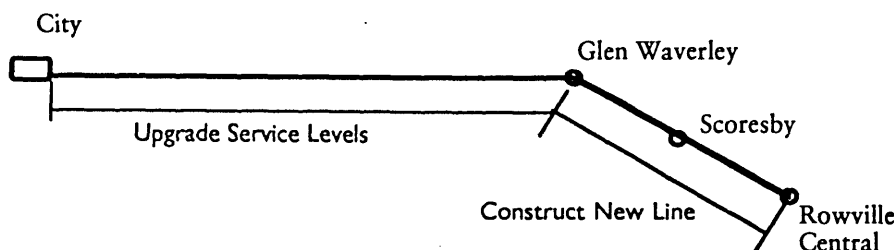
The department appears to have changed its tune since last month, when at an EES meeting it unequivocally dropped plans for the rail extension to Rowville. The rail link has not appeared on any of the 'information bulletins' produced by EES consultant Sinclair Knight Merz. The PTUA believes the department has been compelled by community pressure to consider an option it has already rejected, and to maintain that it was never even off the agenda.

Despite its renewed interest in the plans, detailed by the PTUA in its *Making Connections* report (see opposite), the department has raised the estimated cost of the link to \$100 million from the original \$85 million. According to Mr Aitken, the increase resulted because the EES team had "done a bit more work." We wonder whether the EES team has been similarly diligent in revising its cost estimate of \$600 million for the Scoresby Freeway!

The PTUA believes a rail link to Rowville will greatly benefit commuters in the region, most of whom want to travel primarily in an east-west direction and will not be greatly assisted by a north-south freeway. Projected travel time from Rowville to Glen Waverley is eight minutes, a substantial saving compared with either private car travel or the circuitous 754 bus (which was extended from Wheelers Hill to Rowville in response to community pressure, but still doesn't run on evenings or weekends).

However, taxpayers and Outer East residents should be concerned that the rail link option is still not being considered on its own merits, as part of an 'environmentally friendly transport' alternative to expensive new freeways. Instead it appears to have been incorporated into the four-option framework, whose self-defeating logic ensures that no improvements in public transport will take place without new roads being built as well.

Glen Waverley Line - Rowville Extension (10 minute service throughout)



Proposed Glen Waverley—Rowville rail plan (from Making Connections—PTUA)

Keeping in touch...

PTUA office

Ground Floor, 247 Flinders Lane, Melb.
Telephone: (03) 9650 7898
(Office volunteers are earnestly sought!)

Committee Meetings

Third Thursday of each month.
Please call the office for details.

Membership Enquiries

Graeme Gibson: (03) 9650 7898

World Wide Web

Our home page is on Vicnet at
<http://www.vicnet.net.au/~ptua/firstpt.htm>

Committee Members

Paul Mees—President	
Josephine Connellan—Vice President	
Les Chandra—Secretary	
James Hoffman—Treasurer	
John McPherson—Assistant Secretary	
Patrick O'Connor—Media Liaison	
Peter Dann	Demitri Pimenides
Alan Hardie	Domenica Settle
Mary Jamieson	Christina Sindt
Phil Morey	Gerry Warren
Anthony Morton	

City Link - update on court actions

Members may recall that Peter Allan's case against the tax concessions granted to Transurban for the construction of the City Link tollway has been stymied for some time on the technical issue of 'standing'. Peter's appeal on this issue was heard on Friday 16 May before Justice Mansfield of the Federal Court of Australia, and we are currently awaiting the court's decision. If favourable, the case will go back to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal where the real issues will be decided.

The appeal on Phil Morey's Trade Practices case against the City Link prospectus is to be heard before the full Federal Court on 11 June. As reported in the previous edition of *PTUA News*, Transurban's application for an order that the PTUA pay the costs of Phil's case has been dismissed. Transurban are now retaliating, some twelve months after the original case, by demanding that the costs be borne personally by PTUA President Paul Mees. In a preliminary hearing on Friday 23 May before Justice Heerey of the Federal Court, Paul argued that the application be struck down immediately by the court. At the time of printing, however, we have not heard a decision.

Members are reminded that donations in support of Peter and Phil's cases can be made to People Against City Link, c/o 81 Keele Street, Collingwood 3066.

Read our next issue for further details.

Patrick O'Connor comments...

Federation Square?

Plans being made for the Federation Square project need to be carefully scrutinised. With barely any notice at all, the Princes Bridge platforms which serviced the Epping and Hurstbridge train lines were demolished, and Gippsland train services were transferred from Platform 1 to Platform 12 at Flinders Street to free up that platform for the Epping and Hurstbridge lines.

Moves to curtail services of the no. 70 tram from Wattle Park to Batman Avenue must be resisted. The no. 70 tram route is a much faster service from the south east to Flinders Street station and the Arts Centre precinct.

Most important of all, there must be an absolute guarantee that no services will be disrupted by this massive project. The lesson from the part closure of the Upfield line needs to be learned. The planned reduction of rail lines needs to be carefully studied to ensure that future options for increased rail transport corridors are not excluded—a clear requirement under Section 16 of the Transport Act.

Service Declines

The PTUA calls on Transport Minister Robin Cooper, and the PTC Chief Executive Ian Dobbs, to immediately stem the dramatic decline in public transport service levels.

The PTUA has recently been inundated with complaints from commuters who

cannot get to work in time or are seriously inconvenienced in other ways. This can have detrimental effects on trade and industry quite apart from the inconvenience to passengers.

Premier Jeff Kennett must bear the blame for undoing all the recoveries made in patronage and revenue built up by former Transport Minister Alan Brown. During Mr Brown's term as Minister, during a record period of industrial peace, patronage on V/Line and metropolitan services recorded the highest increases

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since the 1960s. No sooner had Mr Brown left for London than Mr Kennett and Treasurer Alan Stockdale intervened in the work of the new minister, Robin Cooper, and his

important renegotiation of the transport reform agreement relating to staffing levels, government savings and enterprise bargaining. This led to industrial turmoil, unwise union action, loss of morale, and consequent unreliability across the system.

At the root of these problems are unworkable privatisation plans which have destabilised the entire system. The PTUA has been unable to secure any answers to questions on privatisation's impact on service frequencies and fares. The Government must understand that real innovation in public transport is based on comprehensive planning, not the chaos of wasteful competition.

The current level of subsidy to private bus operators is approximately \$183 million per annum, while the subsidy to all

Met Train, Met Tram and Met Bus services taken together is about \$100 million per annum. The comparative level of service achieved with these subsidies is important to taxpayers. The Government gives the impression that it does not know the expected financial and service-level outcomes of introducing private operators. Why else would it not guarantee ceilings on fare levels or retention of existing timetables, while insisting privatisation inherently reduces operating costs?

The PTUA calls on the Minister to keep his eye on the main game, and ensure that services are reliable as winter approaches, so that patronage levels are not threatened. This is what is demanded by and in the interests of users, taxpayers and service operators.

Federation Square project big winner from State transport budget

Three quarters of state budget public transport investment will actually go to works required for the Federation Square development, and will have no benefit for, or even be detrimental to, public transport users.

Out of a total budget allocation of \$170 million, \$123 million will go to "new train management facilities" to replace facilities in the Jolimont Yards between Flinders Street and Richmond stations. These works will in no way improve public transport operation, yet are being charged to the public transport budget rather than to the Federation Square allocation.

Train storage sidings are being created at a number of points on the rail system to replace sidings that will be lost in Jolimont Yards by the reduction in track numbers to only the twelve running lines. The operational management task to bring trains into use as they are needed will become harder, with scattered storage locations. There do not even appear to be any 'cripple' sidings available near Flinders Street, to park disabled trains out of the way during peak periods. We confidently predict more unreliability on a system where reliability has been worse than

mediocre in the last few months.

The Wattle Park tram (no. 70) will probably have its route changed by the Federation Square project. It will possibly access Flinders Street via the new Exhibition Street extension, which will no doubt be slower. The alteration would prejudice future options that include a proposal—previously backed by the former local councils—to extend the no. 70 tram through the disused Platform 13 at Flinders Street, and then across the old Sandridge bridge and past the casino to connect to St. Kilda and Port Melbourne light rail routes. This project would link many sporting and entertainment venues such as the tennis centre, Olympic Park and the new state swimming centre at Albert Park, not to mention the casino (where major traffic congestion is developing that light rail would fix) and the extensive new Mirvac residential development at Port Melbourne. A frequent tram shuttle along Batman Avenue and Swan Street kept the whole tennis centre area car-free during the inaugural tournament several years ago.

Perhaps our ideologically driven Government really believes private train operators will surmount all obstacles—even lack of adequate operating facilities.

John McPherson

Auditor-General critical of privatisation

The State Government may not have saved a cent from privatising two country rail lines and could repeat its mistakes when it sells the entire transport network next year. So states auditor-general Ches Baragwanath, as reported by *The Age* on 15 May.

The auditor-general's report is critical of the contracting-out of Melbourne-to-Warmambool passenger services to West Coast Railways. According to the report, there is no proof that taxpayers have saved the promised \$3 million per year from privatisation. In fact, the subsidy provided to West Coast to run the service is on a par with that formerly provided to the PTC.

The Government was criticised for failing to review the performance of West Coast or the other private rail operator, Hoy's, which runs the Melbourne-to-Cobram service. Several hidden subsidies have also come to light, including the provision of an interest-free loan of \$300,000 to West Coast in 1995 "to overcome short-term liquidity problems," and a \$122,000 reimbursement to offset increases in the cost of diesel fuel.

The report also notes that West Coast has *never* met its 95 per cent punctuality target, its best record so far being 89.5 per cent. (No doubt many of our members will attest to this fact!) No penalties have been imposed by the Government, however, as in most cases the delays resulted from the poor condition of the track.

In response to the report, Opposition transport spokesman Peter Batchelor has called on the Government to abandon the privatisation of the PTC. Transport Minister Robin Cooper has

(continued Page 6)

Upfield update

As previously announced by the Government, a six-month closure of the southern end of the Upfield line began on 1 May to facilitate City Link construction works at Flemington Bridge. This was in spite of clear assurances from the Transport Minister in November last year that no shutdown would be needed.

The alternative travel arrangements are slow and circuitous, to say the least, and add no less than 20 minutes to the journey. There was no consultation with the Upgrade Upfield Coordinating Committee or the PTUA over the closure.

Reports are that Sydney Road trams are extremely crowded, as Upfield patrons give up and take the tram instead. Local transport activist Kevin Healey reports occasions when the connecting bus from Flemington Bridge to Newmarket station has arrived just as the so-called special connecting train has pulled out of Newmarket station. Seasoned public transport users will ask: what's new?

PTUA committee member Demitri Pimenedes confirms long waits at interchange points between bus and train on the way to Fawkner and return. At Flemington Bridge station access is by an extremely long steep ramp, and is difficult for older people.

On a more positive note, the Government has forestalled fears that the closure will provide an excuse to cancel the proposed upgrade, by letting more than \$10 million worth of contracts to upgrade the line. The contracts cover upgrades to the power supply and signalling systems, and the construction of a new 2km section of track between Fawkner and Gowrie.

We remind the Government of its promise to Upfield passengers, that we can look forward to riding a new, improved Upfield line from no later than 1 November this year.

The Boronia Station plan...

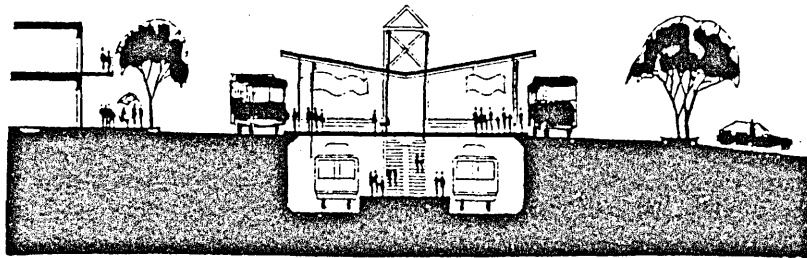
Members may recall the PTUA involvement in the 'Boronia station' campaign, to achieve a high quality train/bus interchange as part of the level crossing removal works at the Dorset-Boronia Road intersection.

John Holland Constructions won the design and build contract, and work started in May. The contract price is some \$21 million, rather less than the previous estimate of \$28 million. The lower cost vindicates the estimates made by architect and PTUA committee member Peter Dann. Members will remember the design for the interchange that Peter produced in 1995.

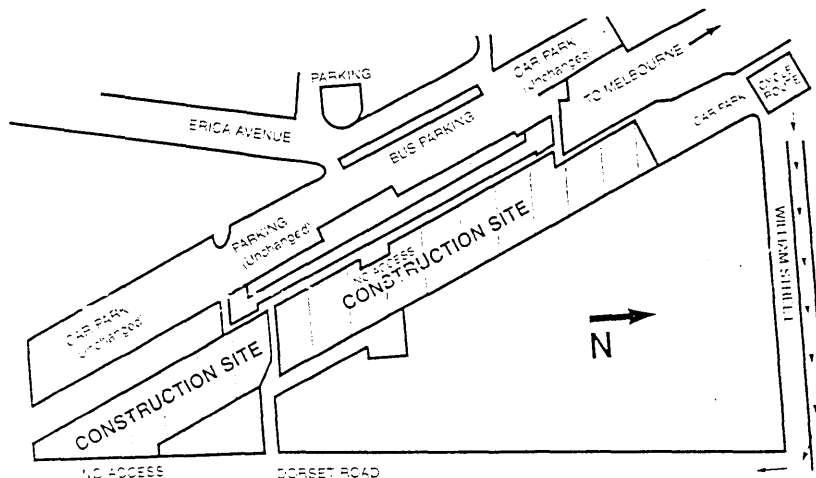
Drawing on the features of the new stations in the Perth suburban rail system, Peter's plan brought the buses right over the platform and provided escalator access for convenient interchange.

The John Holland design brings the buses close but to one side of the station. Access to the platform is by steps, or by a lift (intended mainly for disabled users).

We consider the Boronia station an important demonstration project in the heart of marginal state electorates. When our current campaign to vastly improve public transport in the Outer East and Scoresby Corridor bears fruit, the Boronia station will be a major interchange between a dense network of local buses and an improved rail service well into the 21st century.



Peter Dann's vision for a Boronia bus/rail interchange. A similar concept could work in Springvale.



The John Holland design for Boronia station, incorporating features of the PTUA plans.

...a solution for Springvale?

The PTUA has lashed out at suggestions that Springvale railway station should be relocated away from the centre of the Springvale shopping centre, and has instead called for the construction of a new bus/rail interchange on the present station site.

In the PTUA's opinion, relocation of the station away from the busy shopping centre would be tantamount to closing the station. It would bring inconvenience and increased travel time to commuters (especially those currently arriving at the station by bus) and would make Springvale a less attractive destination for shoppers.

What is needed instead is an upgraded facility, like the one we suggested for Boronia (see above). The railway line could be

put underground and a new bus/rail interchange built. A new plaza could add to the attractiveness of the area.

Upgraded public transport would be designed to serve the needs of the local community in a cost-effective manner and should be supported. Instead local politicians seem to want to waste money on appalling suggestions like closing stations. We estimate that the capital cost of building a bus/rail interchange, together with abolition of the level crossing, would be around 10-15 million dollars.

Proper public transport facilities and services are a worthwhile investment in the future of Springvale, and something that all residents and local councillors should actively support.

Les Chandra

Recent letters to the PTUA

- Member **Stephen Morey** of Sandringham reports on the value of the *Making Connections* report to the Bayside City Council. Copies of the report have gone to all councillors courtesy of Stephen. His accompanying letter points out the long term disaster of freeway building and the benefits to all of improved access without the car. Other PTUA members could consider personally acquainting their Council with our new report.

- Sometime PTUA member **Bernie Weston** wrote in January to point out how useless it is to improve weekend train services (opening the Loop and running half hourly trains on Sundays) when the suburban feeder buses are non-existent. Mulgrave, where Bernie lives, has no evening or Sunday services.

- **Bill Traill**, president of the Wodonga Trains Group, writes to comment on the public-versus-private-enterprise debate. According to Bill, "on the Albury line...V/Line staff have developed an enviable record over the years." He continues: "One can experience all levels of service quality from both sectors."

- **Heather Elliott** of Clifton Hill has recently returned to Melbourne. She writes:

I am a public transport user by choice. After 3 months' experience of fast, frequent and efficient public transport in both large and small cities throughout Europe and East Asia, it is unbelievable to come back to eastern suburbs Melbourne...I find myself standing by the side of the road waiting 20 to 35 minutes for a bus during peak hour, and having to be home by 7pm because that's when the service finishes. And Sundays? A walk of at least 25 minutes before I can meet any vehicle with more than four wheels.

- **Cara Sandys** writes an encouraging letter that we reproduce in full:

Having been a passionate supporter of public transport all my life, I was delighted to find out about your association. Over the years, I've got used to justifying my use of public transport to car drivers who cannot believe that I can 'survive' without a car.

Not only am I still alive and kicking, but I run my business both here and in the U.K. using trains, buses and

trams to get around. I sell jewellery which I make and travel extensively around both countries. I find my outlets by buying a ticket to a certain destination and then hopping on and off en route. I even make my jewellery while I'm on the road, much to the curiosity of my fellow travellers.

I've always found public transport here to be cheap and generally reliable (compared with the UK). Maybe if more Melburnians appreciated the system it wouldn't be facing the possible disaster of privatisation.

- **Elizabeth Lopez** sent us a copy of her complaint letter to the National Bus Company. Some excerpts follow:

"I am writing to complain about the lack of timetables posted at bus stops on your City-Latrobe route."

"Many of your bus stops are isolated and not well lit at night. Because customers don't know when to expect a bus, we cannot take the option of wandering around the corner for a coffee, or to weigh up the alternatives—catch a train, taxi or arrange a lift."

"When I called your complaints number this morning, I was told that due to restructuring you will not be posting up timetabling information until 1 June."

"I have asked several drivers to pass on this complaint. They have all refused, saying they have informed management time and time again of customers' concerns and have no faith in your willingness to act."

National Bus have now been in touch with Elizabeth. They assure her timetables will go up soon(!)

- **Alan Parker** of Footscray questions the *bona fides* of the Federal Road Funding Inquiry while Australian governments ignore our Rio Climate Treaty obligations. He points out that even the USA has had the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) since 1991. Recipient US states can spend highway funds on roads or on public transport or on other measures to reduce environmental impact of road use. After 6 years, the ISTEA act has fulfilled expectations. The UK government is also committed to alternative means of travel which have less environmental impact. At the forthcoming climate treaty conference in Japan, Australia will be isolated from all the other OECD countries who will reach agreement on the next steps.

(from Page 4)

objected that the report "singles out" a single transport operator which has in fact "been treated in exactly the same way as the PTC and Hoy's." Surely, though, if the Government claims that private operators are necessarily more efficient, then it is entirely appropriate to single out private operators and hold them to higher standards!

The PTUA is opposed to the privatisation of public transport services, on the grounds that it will defeat moves toward a

properly integrated multimodal system, and that passengers are at least as likely to see reductions in service frequency, reliability and quality as they are to see improvements. The auditor-general's report confirms our fears, and furthermore suggests that privatisation does not even produce the cost savings by which it is justified. We are left to wonder what the Government's rationale could be, other than pure ideology.

Tony Morton

Ticketing troubles

As has been predicted by the PTUA in many submissions over the years, there has been an immediate unfavorable reaction from customers to the automated ticketing machines (ATMs) being tried on the Burwood tram route and the Glen Waverley and Alamein rail lines.

The main complaints are:

- Passengers have considerable difficulty purchasing tickets on crowded trams, often finding it impossible, and therefore travel free of charge despite being willing to pay.
- ATMs do not sell all day tickets.
- Short trip tickets cannot be validated.
- When ATMs are out of service (a frequent occurrence), people travel free, and trams have to be returned to their depots.
- On the no. 75 tram route from the City to East Burwood, there are 71 stops but only 26 ticket sale outlets.

The auditor-general has criticised the introduction of automated ticketing, saying that ATMs are unlikely to mitigate the \$10 million annual cost of fare evasion. According to his report, fare evasion has risen from 3 per cent to 11 per cent on

the Glen Waverley rail line, where the new ticket machines are being tested. The report concludes that increases in fare evasion are linked to the policy of reducing station staff and encouraging off-system purchasing, a policy the PTUA has criticised ever since the 1990 'MetTicket' fiasco. ATMs are a further move in this direction and are likely to exacerbate the problem, especially since ticket barriers will be installed at only 20 out of some 200 train stations.

A *Herald Sun* editorial from November last year makes the point that automated ticketing, originally promised to be in place by February 1995, is now running two years late, and asks: "why did the Kennett Government gamble on an untested, complex computerised system instead of well-tried, simpler systems already working satisfactorily overseas and in Sydney?" In the light of the auditor-general's report, we might add: does the Kennett Government really expect to save money and enhance the public transport system by introducing automated ticketing, or is its intent simply to break the unions and get its hands on some hi-tech wizardry, without regard to the cost either to the taxpayer or to public transport users?

From the Bush

Federal Opposition Concern over Overland

The Federal Opposition has called for urgent upgrading of the Overland train and the Adelaide-Melbourne train line, according to the *Adelaide Advertiser* of 18th March.

Refurbishment, said Labor transport spokesman Lindsay Tanner, would attract people back to the Overland and provide additional employment opportunities. Currently the Overland is restricted in speed to 10kph on some sections of track, a situation that Mr Tanner declares "clearly unacceptable."

Despite this call for upgrades, Overland operator Australian National and the SA Transport Minister have ruled out any refurbishment until the proposed sale of the service has been finalised. In the event that no buyer is found, Federal Transport Minister Sharp has given an assurance that the Overland, Ghan and Indian Pacific would remain operational, and that "we would try and manage them into a better situation to make them more attractive in the future."

Mr Tanner also called for the raising of bridges between Adelaide and Melbourne to allow double-stacking of freight. AN public affairs officer Graeme Dorling responded that this would entail deepening tunnels in the Adelaide Hills, and that the total cost would be around \$100 million. Mr Tanner believes this expenditure is essential to allow SA to become competitive in rail with other states.

Flinders Street Platform Changes

The State Government has announced a reorganisation of the platforms at Flinders Street Station in preparation for the Federation Square project. As part of the reorganisation, it is intended that all V/Line services through Flinders Street run via Platform 12, on the river side of the station.

Liz Munro of the Bairnsdale Save Our Train group reports

that the new arrangements cause difficulty for those with mobility problems as there are no lifts to carry Platform 12 passengers to street level, and the new platform at Spencer Street is reached from the far end of the concourse, a further 80 metres or so. Luggage handling facilities are mediocre, and passengers are advised to book their luggage through.

(See also other articles regarding Federation Square in this edition of *PTUA News*.)

Wimmera-Mallee update

The Wimmera-Mallee Rail Service Association has been active in campaigning for the reinstatement of train services to Ararat and beyond, and for the Overland to meet regional needs. So far this year their main efforts have been towards:

- Seeking support among the five newly elected councils in the Wimmera region.
- Understanding how the Rail Corporations Act and the privatisation process will affect the region, and ensuring options for passenger services remain open.
- Making sure the Overland will meet regional needs after being sold off, including stops at stations in the Wimmera.
- Lobbying the Department of Infrastructure to finalise Transporting Victoria and include regional responses (such as a regional transport hub at Ararat).

**Copy Deadline for the next PTUA
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COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT

Disability Support Pensioners

If you are in receipt of the Disability Support Pension and need assistance and friendship, you can join with DSP Australia Inc. every Tuesday from 12 noon-4pm, at Level 1, Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne.

Please phone 9742-5530 for an appointment if you are a DSP Pensioner and have a serious problem. (Please quote Pension Card No.)

On Tuesdays between 12 noon-4pm you can also reach DSP Australia on mobile: (015) 043208.

If you're worried about the forthcoming privatisation of Victoria's public transport, and how it could affect your public transport service, come along to a

Members' Meeting Privatisation — Rhetoric and Reality

Thursday 26th June

**Ross House Ground Flr Back Meeting Room
247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne**

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.

Name _____

New address _____

Town / Suburb _____ Postcode _____

Phone (BH) _____ (AH) _____

Expressions of Interest?

This little gem was found buried in the back pages of a local newspaper. This semi-secret body has existed for some time; unfortunately we didn't find out it was seeking new members until the closing date had passed. Maybe it's not too late to submit an application!

Expressions of Interest

Opportunity to contribute in shaping the Public Transport Service

In 1993 the Minister for Transport appointed members to his portfolio's peak consultative body, the Victorian Public Transport Forum. The Forum advises the Minister of customer concern regarding public transport services and ensures user input into overall transport planning. The Minister now seeks expressions of interest for positions on the Forum.

Nominations are sought from interested individuals to represent the following regions:

Inner Melbourne
Northern Melbourne
South Eastern Melbourne
Eastern Metropolitan
Western Metropolitan
Northern Country
Eastern Country
North Eastern Country
Western Country
General Ministerial (2 positions)

Selection will be based on merit and the new members will be appointed by the Minister for a period of two years. Members will be paid the relevant meeting day rate and will receive travelling and other expenses in accordance with public service determinations.

For further information telephone (03) 9655 8906

Nominations including a brief resume of relevant experience, should be addressed to:

VPTF - Private and Confidential
Minister for Transport

PO Box 2797Y
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

by not later than
30 May 1997.



INFRASTRUCTURE
47CK15477/CRA