

News

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Newsletter of the
Public Transport Users Association

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Victorian Auditor-General consults PTUA on review of public transport performance and automatic ticketing

A recent report from the Victorian Auditor-General Mr Ches Baragwanath into Ministerial Portfolios includes comments on public transport performance; while a 'performance audit' is currently underway at the Audit Office into the effectiveness of the newly introduced automatic ticketing system.

Key findings in the Ministerial Portfolio Report relating to Public Transport were:

Privatisation of bus services

* The government's service agreement with National Bus Company was extended for more than 6 years without being subject to competitive tendering.

* The revised payment structure incorporated in the new Service Agreement with National Bus company is likely to result in a decrease in future savings to be achieved by the agreement.

*The Department advised that it now considers the punctuality target level to be unreasonable and intends amending the private bus Service Agreement to lower the target levels.

Public Transport revenue and patronage levels

* An analysis of metropolitan rail patronage levels which assists in monitoring fare evasion was not possible due to the removal of passenger counters pending the installation and operation of the automated ticketing system.

The PTUA through Secretary Les Chandra supplied information for the Audit Office Ministerial Portfolio review. The PTUA comments that the private bus operator appears to be receiving a better financial deal from the government while being allowed to lower service performance standards for the customers.

The PTUA believes the patronage levels assumed on the former Met Bus system were at best a 'guesstimate' and that the so-called spectacular rise in National Bus carryings may well have been a mirage. Patronage levels have been on a slide since 1996-97. As far as the PTC automatic ticketing system goes, the PTUA despairs of an organi-

sation that dismantles devices that give information on passenger numbers while installing another system with known large scale reliability problems.

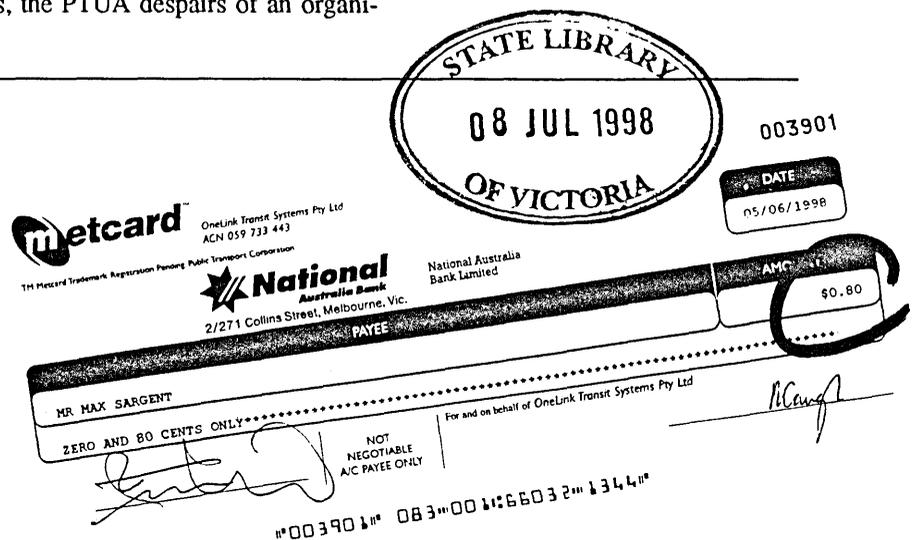
Automatic Ticketing Performance Audit

On Wednesday 10th June PTUA President Paul Mees, Secretary Les Chandra and Vicepresident John McPherson briefed senior Audit Office staff in a one and half hour meeting about the PTUA ticketing system policy to aid in their project planning.

The Audit Office now has copies of the ministerial ticketing taskforce (of which Paul Mees was a member) report to former transport minister Peter Spiker; the most up-to-date research on ticketing systems by former Zurich Public Transport Authority member, Felix Laube; and a letter to the PTUA from the public transport authority in Amsterdam confirming the return of tram conductors to all their routes (see copy of letter in this newsletter).

AUTO TICKETING FARCE

Max Sargent of Thornbury was sent this refund cheque (illustrated right) following the malfunction of a tram ticket machine. What has the processing and production of this refund cheque transaction cost? It is one result of the separation and privatisation of the Onelink fare collection system outside the integrated public transport authority. Fare collection and ticket inspection by tram conductors meant personalised service and ludicrous expensive incidents like this simply did not occur.



How much of the Victorian transport budget went into sending this 80 cent cheque?

Keeping in touch...

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Committee Meetings

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

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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
John McPherson — Vice President
Les Chandra — Secretary
Tim Hoffman — Treasurer
John McPherson — Assistant Secretary
Peter Dann Anthony Morton
Wendy Everingham Demetri Pimenides
Alan Hardie Christina Sindt
Mary Jamieson Gerry Warren

Rail Sidelined in Albury-Wodonga, Trucks on Centre Stage.

Albury Internal By-Pass

The PTUA has called on the State Governments of New South Wales and Victoria to withdraw their plans for a freeway through the centre of Albury, and to instead encourage more efficient use of already existing rail infrastructure.

Albury residents are angry at the road decision, which threatens to cut the town in half and leave residents with noise and pollution problems. The so-called internal by-pass. But there is a better, cheaper solution.

Albury's most pressing traffic problem is the growing number of heavy freight vehicles that roar through the city day and night. These freighters don't pay for the roads they destroy and impose the sort of costs on the community that Albury people are now fighting to minimise. They are simply not accountable for the noise, pollution and road damage they cause.

More incentives to move freight by rail would solve much of this problem. In fact, all the freight now carried by trucks on the Hume Highway could be carried on just 10 extra freight trains per day. Given that rail offers a far more energy-efficient, quieter and safer solution than road freight, there is no good reason to carry so much freight by road. It happens because it suits the trucking companies and the road lobby, who are

now being given \$200 million more of taxpayers' money to support their own interests with the 'low rent' internal by-pass.

The PTUA supports the Save Our Cities group in its opposition to the road, and has criticised governments' handling of the issue. But instead of being invited to consider all the road and rail options, residents have been offered the carrot of an out-of-town freeway in the long term, to gain support for the bureaucrats' real agenda of a cheaper internal by-pass through the town now. Albury-Wodonga residents have quite clearly been treated dishonestly, and the PTUA urges them to fight every step of the way.

Rail May By-Pass Wodonga

Bill Traill, President, Wodonga Trains Group reports that Premier Kennett has promised as much as \$45million dollars to take one road/rail level crossing out of Wodonga's main street to facilitate commercial development and send the rail line to Melbourne around Wodonga, quite possibly meaning the end of either rail freight or rail passenger facilities for Wodonga. Passengers to Melbourne would need to back-track to Albury to join the train. Wodonga Trains Group and the PTUA regard this as an irresponsible use of public funds when \$45million would go a long way to rehabilitate the standard gauge line to Melbourne that is falling apart under current traffic let alone the potential traffic under a rational national transport policy.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT FORUM

for people with a disability

Wednesday 29th July 1998
7:15pm to 9:30pm
at



Maroondah Social and Community Health Centre
75 Patterson Street
Ringwood East 3135



SPEAKERS

Public Transport Corporation - ticket machines
Disability Consumers - transport issues



Contact
Eastern Self Advocacy Group
9879 3933
RSVP 14th July

Conductors in Sydney, Conductorless in Melbourne

Sydney Light Rail trams are now carrying conductors at weekends. The ticket machines at tram stops are not coping so as in other world cities like Amsterdam it is back to the reliability and flexibility of a real live conductor.

Here in Melbourne, of course, a complete scorched earth policy regarding conductors exists.

Not even the historic W-class trams are safe and for reasons that defy rationality these elderly but efficient vehicles are to be butchered in an unsuccessful attempt to insert ticket machines while

retaining driver visibility and passenger safety.

The PTUA believes it cannot be done. The W-class committee of the National Trust is prepared to compromise once again on the insertion of ticket machines and appears to have no concern for W-class user convenience.

Rumours suggest W-class trams may not survive on ordinary routes more than 18 months. Such is the rigidity and short sightedness of current transport operation in our city. See the "Amsterdam letter" elsewhere in this newsletter.

MINISTER COOPER MAKES A GESTURE TOWARDS PTUA STAFFING CONCERNS

In a news release dated 17 June the Transport Minister Robin Cooper announces "Premium" status for Moorabbin station. At the end of the Premium station project only 30% of Melbourne's 200 plus stations will be staffed from first to last train. The PTUA believes staff will be totally non-existent on all other stations.

Mr Cooper claims that there will be "an increased staff presence on trains. Our customer Service Employees, together with Victoria Police officers, are ensuring a human presence on trains." Nice to see the minister using the rhetoric of increased staffing levels. The reality we suspect will be a shuffling of present resources, not a boost in overall staff numbers.

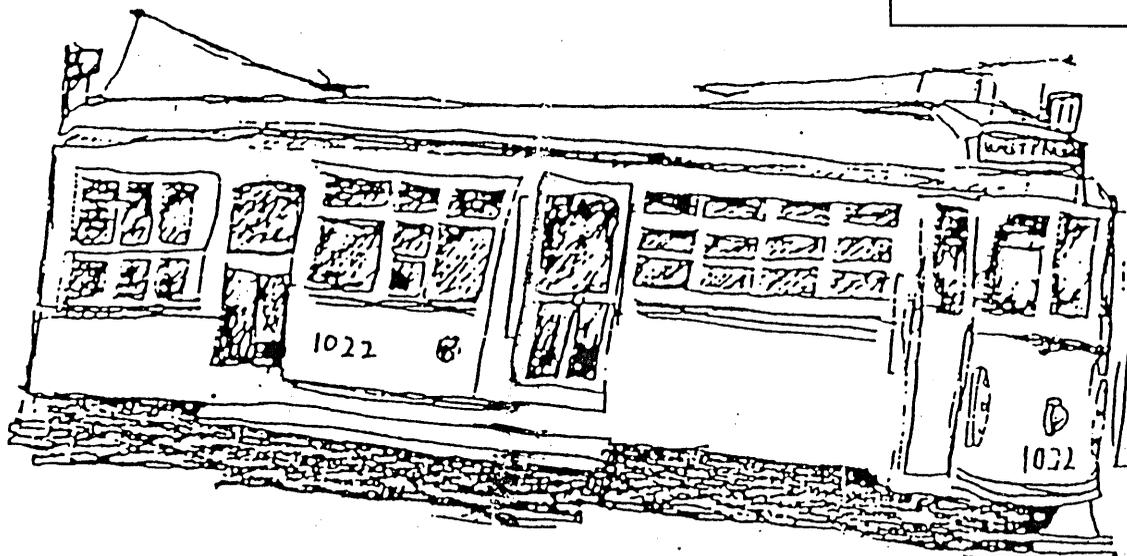
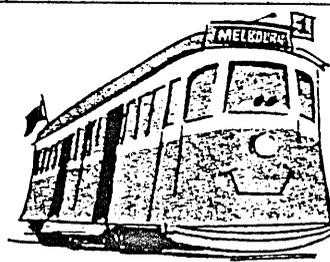
- John McPherson

SACKED CONNIES 'I PREFER A CONDUCTOR' CAMPAIGN GOES WORLD WIDE

Sacked conductors have kept up a barrage of demonstrations and media events over the last three months. In particular the 'Full Monty' cabaret on the GPO steps some weeks ago received TV attention around the world. The connies intend to campaign right up to the next state election.

3RD Magazine will soon feature a special Tram Conductor issue.

For more information about the campaign and how you can help phone 9419 1412 or 9419 1983 during business hours.



Most Authoritative Opinion on British Rail Privatisation

The last chairman of the publicly owned British Railways Board considers he could make a better job of running the railways - given the same opportunity and the doubled subsidies now being paid to private operators. Former chairman John Welsby in a speech to the Chartered Institute of Transport emphasised that the two billion pound per year subsidy going to the UK passenger rail system today, is twice that British Rail was given only 3 years ago, and that funding levels are now guaranteed for seven years, giving a stability and ability to plan that British Rail never enjoyed.

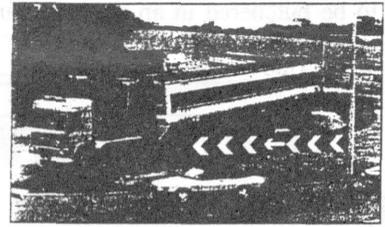
Mr Welsby notes that after an initial continued rise in quality of service after privatisation, from early 1997 levels of punctuality began to collapse across the system. Mr Welsby suggests this is a classic sign of under-management of the basic 'nuts and bolts' issues of running a safe and customer-friendly railway.

"The privatised rail industry is in danger of being perceived as having collected in two years almost as much bad 'reputational baggage' as British Rail did in 50."

From UK 'Rail' magazine, number 324. A footnote from Herald-Sun 20/6/98 Richard Branson, operator of privatised UK Virgin West Coast Trains, had a 'bumpy ride' last year, attacked for unreliability, poor punctuality and failed air-conditioning. Quoting Branson - New trains are on the way but "one would assume that things are going to get worse before they get better."

RAIL PRIVATISATION MADNESS

- More than 700 carriages and locomotives are stored in depots and army bases. Many of these trains could be brought back to provide new services and reduce overcrowding. However, under privatisation the leasing charges are so high that the rail industry prefers to keep the spare trains behind barbed wire and guarded by armed troops!
- Platform staff at Beckenham Junction used mud to put out a trackside fire because the fire extinguishers belonged to a different company!
- The railways used to send their internal mail by rail. Not anymore, now some use road haulage firms. This can lead to such severe delays that the information is out of date by the time it arrives!
- Trains being sent to and from repair are now routinely sent by road, because it's cheaper to use road haulage than pay Railtrack's 'track access charges'. Some locomotive depots now receive their diesel fuel by road rather than rail.



SCORESBY EES - COMMUNITY STILL WAITING

The saga of the Scoresby Corridor environmental effects study seems never ending to those community groups with real concerns about despoiling the Dandenong Creek valley with a land-grabbing freeway while ignoring the real long-term solutions to transport needs - high quality public transport. Now nearly two years behind schedule, the latest deadline for production of the EES should pass about publishing time for this newsletter.

All PTUA members with concerns about the Scoresby corridor are asked to keep a close watch on the media and to comment to councils, government and local papers by letter, fax and phone on the implications of the released plan which we fully expect to approve the north-south freeway while giving public transport a limited role with no rail extensions. Don't hesitate to make your feelings known, the long delay may indicate even official doubts about current plans. Most councils in the Scoresby Corridor currently believe, courtesy of their Vicroads trained traffic engineers, that a north-south freeway will solve predominantly east-west congestion problems. Only Nilumbik and Yarra Ranges councils are currently dubious regarding the Scoresby freeway but Manningham Council has left the Vicroads propagated council' committee.



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uw referentie

nummer
9773000
bijlagen

datum
13. November 1997

onderwerp
conductors

Dear Sir,

In answer to your fax of 8 October 1997 we can give you the following information.

In January 1991 we started to re-introduce the conductor in the back of the tramcars in Amsterdam. The reasons for re-introducing the conductor are:

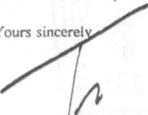
- fare evasion on tramcars had raised in recent years to about 15%
- vandalism was occurring in the back of the tramcars
- passengers felt unsafe, especially in the evening hours, and avoided travelling by tramcar.

The re-introduction of the conductor has been an enormous success. Fare evasion went down to 1%. Surveys among drivers and passengers revealed that 95% of them is satisfied that there is a conductor in the back of the tramcar. They feel a lot safer now.

The conductor sells tickets, inspects tickets and gives information about routes and tourist attractions.

At this moment we have a conductor on eleven of the seventeen tram lines.
We recruit new staff as conductors. This is an employment project for people who have been unemployed for at least one year. We hope that by the end of 1998 all tramcars in Amsterdam have a conductor.

Yours sincerely,



Jhr. drs. A.L.F.M. Testa
General Manager

Amsterdam goes back to conductors

PTUA Submission to Stonnington Strategy

Recently, the PTUA prepared a submission to the City of Stonnington transport strategy. The PTUA does not normally prepare submissions in response to municipal transport strategies, as they are time-consuming to prepare, and the MTS's are almost always written by road consulting firms with no interest or expertise in public transport. However, because the City of Stonnington has a pivotal location in the transport infrastructure for south-eastern Melbourne, we felt it important to make a few comments.

The submission addressed many of the issues facing transport in the region, as well as the broader issue of long-term planning for public transport. We noted that public transport is frequently missed out in the planning of urban transport. VicRoads and the state Department of Infrastructure have well spelt out long and short term plans for increased road capacity. Attainment of these goals is assisted by municipal transport (road) engineers. There are no similar goals for public transport and there is no long term strategic planning being done. Unlike roads, there is no institutionalised advocacy for better public transport. The PTUA feels that this void must be filled, and that local government must fill this void.

We believe that for a Municipal Transport Strategy to be of benefit, it must state some clear goals, determine (in some detail) the steps needed to achieve these goals, and then allocate responsibilities for their achievement. This can often be difficult, and it must be realised that local requirements may sometimes not mesh well with other organisations' goals (such as VicRoads or the State Government). The first step that local government must take is to reject so called 'integrated' strategies prepared by road consulting firms and council must realise that municipal transport engineers are also not experienced in balanced or pro-public transport planning. Councils must instead work with the community on a genuinely balanced approach, calling on the few truly experienced experts to ensure a balanced approach to community needs.

Regrettably, the outline of the

Stonnington Transport Strategy that we have seen appears to fall into many of the common pitfalls. For example although the number one goal is to develop a plan that "enhances accessibility, safety and efficiency and reduces the reliance on private car travel", the majority of the action strategies presented are for improved private car facilities, especially provision of additional car parking. This will have the opposite effect and must be rejected.

If an increase in the use of public transport is to be achieved (and all the benefits that flow from that attained), then public transport must be given priority over other forms of transport - both in theory and in practice. This can be difficult to do as it often means providing *less* road space for motor vehicles and *more difficult* access to car parking for those who choose to drive.

Some of the concrete suggestions we made for attaining this goal were:

- Upgrading of rail and tram services to operate at 10 minute frequency
- Reintroduction of staff at all railway stations
- Provision of high quality feeder bus services to railway station in eastern Stonnington
- Minor extension of tram infrastructure (including 72 tram to Caulfield Station and 3 tram to East Malvern station)
- Pro-active work to delays to public transport by private cars, particularly in inner Stonnington (such as along Chapel Street). Ideas that we suggested included bus-only lanes, introduction of 'hook' turns at busy intersections, and pedestrianisation of parts of Chapel Street.

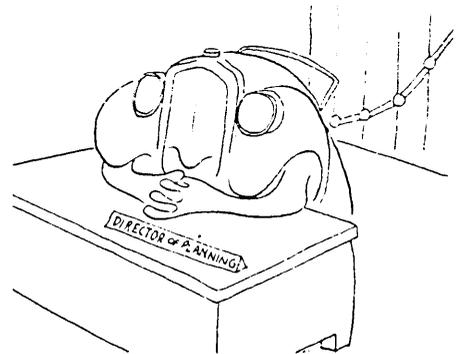
We concluded by arguing that there was much that the City of Stonnington could do to improve public transport in the municipality. We argued that the City should adopt transport and land use policies that encourage the use of public transport and discourage the use of private transport, on economic, environmental and social equity grounds.

The City of Stonnington should then use all its available resources to pressure the responsible agencies and politicians in the State Government to gain an im-

proved public transport service and hence greater public transport use.

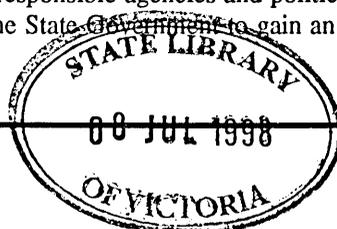
Note: PTUA Committee members Demetri Pimenedes and John McPherson recently attended a half day seminar on better public transport sponsored by the Yarra Ranges Council.

- Les Chandra



Road Research by any other name....?

One of the road lobby think-tanks is a venerable organisation called, until recently, the Australian Road Research Board. As is the way of the modern world, ARRB has become ARRB Transport Research Ltd and is now a commercialised 'gun-for-hire' in transport (not just road) research. As an insight into ARRB's new wide-ranging approach, the PTUA recently heard of an ARRB research proposal to 'prove' that trucks would be more efficient than freight trains in the Melbourne-Adelaide corridor. For economic and environmental reasons, such a proposal sounds silly in a national transport context. While National Rail has made questionable investment decisions in this corridor, none is as questionable as the \$200 million road tunnel project underway in the Adelaide Hills to save each truck about five minutes on the journey into Adelaide from the east. By contrast, a rail upgrade in the Hills costing just \$90 million would save each freight train one whole hour. Rail has about 35% of freight in the corridor. Work out the comparative economic benefits.



Time for a new Met bus/tram stop sign?

Last Saturday while travelling through Balwyn I noticed something particularly ridiculous. Every bus stop along one stretch of road featured two bus-stop signs. One labelled 'National Bus Company' and one labelled 'The Met'. None of the bus stops had anything useful like a timetable or a route map (although some did feature the National speciality of a timetable box painted black). PTUA member Jan Lacey has been informed by the Ministry that National Bus and other private operators are only required to install timetable and route information at every third bus stop on each route.

It struck me that this piece of idiocy could actually have negative side effects. The signal given to occasional or first time users would be that there were two different bus operators serving that stop, and, as the operators were unable to agree to something as simple as shared signs, any potential passenger would have to deal with two companies if they wanted any information like timetables. Presumably, the companies would also have their own fare systems, conditions of travel and all the other things that different companies would want to do differently. To add to the confusion, anyone watching the buses go by would discover that one was labelled National and one Driver - neither carrying Met badging.

The fact is, the two operators are both under contract to the State Government

to provide services and both accept and issue Met fares. Until very recently at least, Met information services carried information on timetables for both. Why then cannot there be some marketing co-ordination between the two?

Throughout the 1980s remarkable success was achieved in regional and rural Victoria as the State Transport Authority (which traded as V/Line) slowly took control of all forms of public transport. Throughout the state, regional bus services operated under contract were brought under the umbrella of the STA with a new trading name, livery, timetables and through fares. The whole lot was well co-ordinated so that local residents knew that they could call V/Line information or continue to deal with their local company, while travellers anywhere in the state could find information from one central source. Similar co-ordination took place in regional centres such as Geelong where GTS was introduced as a trading name for co-ordinated services by three local bus operators. Although far from perfect, the new arrangements were a boon to travellers, and people flocked to the new services.

In Melbourne the same degree of co-ordination was never achieved. Although full fare co-ordination was achieved, and government buses, trains and trams re-badged, contract bus services continued to trade under their own names. Later, PTC operated

services introduced their own style of timetable and stop sign that was different from those used for other operators. When the National Bus Company took over most of the former PTC operated services, they rapidly obliterated all signs of the Met from their services, going out of their way to make their vehicles, timetables and stop signs different. Confusion is now common as people are being forced to make an artificial 'choice' between 'Met' and 'National' for pre-travel information when they want to make a journey. Regular travellers know that their Met tickets remain interchangeable, but infrequent or first time travellers would not.

Whether or not you agree with the privatisation of public transport in Melbourne, it is clear that the majority of bus services in Melbourne will continue to be operated by private operators. Why then cannot we have some sort of overall marketing co-ordination between the various operators? Behind the scenes, the co-ordinated fare system would be retained, and co-ordination of timetables improved. At the public face, a common colour scheme for all buses, trains and trams in Melbourne would be introduced.

To the public, there would be no confusion, and the real choice - that between public transport and the private car - would be much simpler.

- Les Chandra

Copy Deadline for the next PTUA News is 15th August 1998

Newsletter Production Team: Christiana Stergiou, John McPherson and Dorothy Cook

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Our thanks to the dedicated mailout team

Letters In Brief.....

Clara Mandaletti of Ashburton was told by the PTC at Traralgon that there is no guarantee for bicycle tour groups that bikes can be put on a particular train service. Reserving a seat certainly does not guarantee space for a bike.

Jim Richardson of Black Rock has put forward a thoughtful proposal for use of the Dandenong line for a rail extension to Rowville along Wellington Road past Monash University, as an alternative to a Glen Waverley to Rowville extension.

Brigitte Wustemann of Bayswater describes the inaccurate information facilities on Auburn station. Twice her train has departed from a different platform-there are 3 platforms- from

that stated on train information signs. The press-button information device did not work and there is a shortage of seating.

Diana Rosenfield was travelling on a tram hit from behind by another tram following. She sustained some injuries in the collision and subsequently contacted the PTC when she felt well enough. *The PTC referred her to the Transport Accident Commission who handle accident compensation for public transport accidents as well as road accidents.* TAC policy is that, if not admitted to hospital at the time of the accident, then that person is liable for the first \$420 of any medical costs.

Marilyn Moore of Pascoe Vale South experienced the collapse in the tram service on the busy Sydney Rd route in peakhour on a wet Friday evening, with no trams in her direction for half an hour. She was greatly concerned because she felt she had left ample time to reach her young son waiting some kilometres along the route. Unreliability and lack of information send many public transport users back to their cars. The \$13 million tram supervision and control system that tracks every vehicle was obviously no use in this case (as in many other breakdowns in service).

PTUA Sponsored Dinner to Celebrate Patrick O'Connor, His Life and Achievements.

Speakers from Public Transport Users Association,
Save Albert Park organisation
and Loyola Musical Society.

Venue: Celtic Club Hotel,
corner La Trobe and Queen Sts, Melbourne in upstairs function room.

Date: Wednesday, 29 July, 1998.
Time: 7 pm.

Cost: Regular \$25, Concession \$19 for a banquet style three course meal. A bar will be open. Special food requirements can be catered for with prior notice.

Bookings: Please post booking coupon and cheque to PTUA, Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000.
Closing date for bookings is 22nd July.

Booking Coupon for Patrick O'Connor Celebration Dinner

Name _____

Address _____

Contact Telephone Number _____

Number of Persons Attending _____ Regular (\$25.00 each)

_____ Concession (\$19.00 each)

Total cheque enclosed \$ _____

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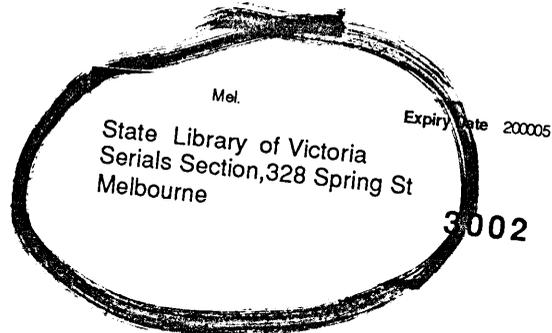
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