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Public Transport Users Assoc.

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The logo for PTUA (Public Transport Users Association) features the letters 'PTUA' in a stylized, bold font. The 'P' and 'T' are solid black, while the 'U' and 'A' are filled with a grid pattern. The letters are set against a dark grey background that is part of a larger map of Victoria.

Geelong Branch

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Submission to the Rural and Regional Committee of the Parliament of Victoria Inquiry into Regional Centres of the Future

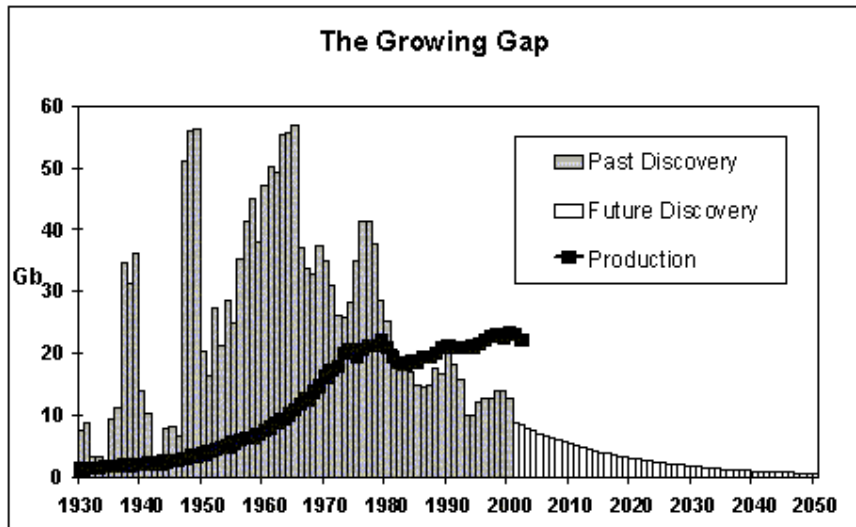
1) Measures to support businesses and government authorities to establish operations in regional Victoria:

- Public transport is very important to support the office-based service economy. For example, good provision of public transport can help reduce business/building setup costs by reducing parking requirements. Conversely, bad public transport discourages it.
- Good public transport can allow families to have only one car, and some individuals and families not to need a car. This would obviously reduce the cost of transport for employees, and therefore general living costs.
- Improving public transport provision helps improve the image of a city or region by bolstering its "clean, green" image. It shows that it is dynamic, innovative and willing to respond to global challenges such as volatile fuel prices and the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Good public transport enhances the viability of the local tourist industry in that public transport supports independent tourist travel. This is a market that is often not catered for by either tour bus operators or driving holidays.
- To ensure that public transport provision in non-metropolitan cities and regions is well planned and integrated, we advocate the establishment of regional public transport authorities, supported by state and federal finance. These locally-based bodies will enhance local 'ownership' of public transport systems and their goals, and provide an ongoing institutional base for planning and promotion of the system, while being responsive to the particular needs of the area.

3) Supporting and Encouraging Population Growth & 4) Promoting Strong Social Capital and High Quality of Life

- People can be reluctant to move to regional areas because of the lack of services that are taken for granted in the metropolitan area. Enhanced services are needed to support increasing populations.
- At the most basic level, public transport services are essential to support segments of the population who can't drive, including children and teenagers. Parents who are 'chained to the steering wheel' don't experience high quality of life, nor do their children.
- Social interaction and connections are promoted by providing services that make it easier for everyone to gain convenient access to jobs, education, social and cultural, and recreational activities, regardless of car ownership or availability.

- As regional centres expand, quality of life problems quickly emerge when the effects of an over-emphasis on car-based travel are felt in the form of traffic congestion, car parking “squeezes”, noise or air pollution. Usable public transport is a fundamental way to tackle those problems.
- Providing transport services that can conveniently replace car trips will improve the resilience of regional centres in the face of volatile fuel prices and the emerging reality of peak oil. Below is a graph, compiled by former oil company geologist Colin Campbell, of worldwide discovery and production of oil



source: www.hubbertpeak.com/campbell

- In the light of the above, as well as concern about the use of all natural resources, the idea of sustainable development has gained increasing importance over recent decades. It was defined by the United Nations Brundtland Commission as development which "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

United Nations, 1987. "Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development." General Assembly Resolution 42/187, 11 December 1987.

- Making changes to the transport habits of a household are fundamental to the promotion of sustainability, as shown by the following table:

Contribution of Household Activities to Greenhouse Gas Generation	
Cooling	1.1%
Clothes Drying	1.8%
Other Appliances	1.8%
Lighting	2.9%
Waste disposal	3.6%
Cooking	4.0%
Refrigeration	7.7%
Hot Water	12%
Heating	15.2%
Transport	49.6%

Source: Australian Greenhouse Office / CSIRO: *National Kilowatt Count of Household Energy Use*, 2002)

These figures show starkly that in order for individuals to make a significant contribution to increasing the sustainability of their activities, they have to take urgent and practical steps to promote environmentally-sustainable transport.

- One of the principal ways this can be done is to decrease the use of private motor vehicles and increase the use of cycling, walking and public transport.

5) Examples of successful promotion of population growth in regional centres

- Since the motor car became the dominant mode of transport, we are not aware of Australian examples of public-transport-based improvements being used to promote growth in regional centres. In fact, we are not aware of it ever having been tried.

Indeed, the decline in the role of many rural towns can be clearly traced to the increasing use of road vehicles, as opposed to public transport, from the 1950s onward.

- In the era when railways were the main means of long-distance transport, many rural towns and cities were the interface between their hinterland and the transport system, and they grew and prospered due that function. Today, the nature of road-based transport is that it frequently by-passes formerly vital rural centres, diminishing their role and causing economic and population decline.

- While some contraction of the rail system from its height in the 1940s was inevitable, it is vital that this reduction is not allowed to be taken too far, given rail freight's generally superior energy efficiency. It is ironic that at the same time as there has been a widespread and well-supported campaign for the duplication of the Princes Highway from Geelong to the west, the Warrnambool railway line has been partly un-duplicated by the removal of passing loops at Winchelsea and Colac, thereby reducing the capacity of the railway and the flexibility of its operation.

Tim Petersen & Paul Westcott
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