

Yarra Trams - proposed 2015 network changes

The PTUA is supportive of the proposed network changes to tram routes 1, 6, 8, and 55.

More broadly we support moves to increase the number of routes running every 10 minutes or better, and the time spans of those frequent services. We consider such frequencies to be the key to improving the overall usability of the public transport network, and thus increasing patronage.

We understand that these specific changes will result in greater overall capacity along William Street, and also along Swanston Street/St Kilda Road, which should help relieve overcrowding, and that low floor trams will serve the hospital precinct for the first time.

Therefore we agree that the benefits of the proposed changes far outweigh any disadvantages.

However, we note some caveats with the proposed plans for route 58:

- There are currently no tram platform stops in William Street, and we would urge Yarra Trams, PTV and City of Melbourne to ensure that these are provided sooner rather than later, particularly at the stops closest to Flagstaff and Flinders Street stations.
- Platform stops should continue to provide convenient access to major CBD streets, and interchange with trams at Collins and Bourke Streets, and with buses at Lonsdale Street.
- We have reservations about allocating number 58 to the merged route. We would encourage instead the use of route number 8, as this is well known and will be less confusing for the passengers most likely to need familiarity with which route they need to catch when interchanging.

Care will also be needed to maintain even frequencies along St Kilda Road and Swanston Street, and for the two routes continuing along Lygon Street, to ensure waiting times and overcrowding are kept to a minimum.

We are supportive of moves to improve safety and accessibility for tram services at the Toorak (route 8) terminus. We are concerned that the stop will move further from Glenferrie Road, making interchange from route 16 less convenient, and urge Yarra Trams, VicRoads and City of Stonnington to minimise this distance.

Communicating the changes

We encourage PTV to be clearer about explaining the plan, and its advantages - for instance the PTV web site implies that weekend frequencies would be only every 20 minutes, whereas we understand they would remain for most routes at every 12 minutes or better for most of the day.

Other points worth carefully communicating with passengers include:

- The changes to routes 1 and 6 (replacing 8) at the East Brunswick/Moreland end of these routes
- Options for passengers from Toorak to reach the CBD more quickly by changing to the frequent train services provided at South Yarra

Future network changes

Going forward, we note the impact of the Metro rail tunnel, both during construction and once completed, and encourage PTV and Yarra Trams to continue to carefully plan the deployment of tram services across the CBD to match growth and demand - both for work trips and also for other visitors to the CBD.