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# NEWSLETTER

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## PTUA NEWSLETTER

Editor: Robin Vowels  
Production: Robin Vowels & Bill Devine

We'd like to be able to acknowledge in the same issue those tireless workers who assemble the Newsletter and prepare the mailing out, but that isn't possible because the Newsletter is printed first. Instead, we include the names of those who have assisted in recent issues, and without whose help none of this would be possible.

David Bowd,  
Bill Devine,  
Ken McIntyre,  
Patrick O'Connor,  
John Prideaux and Co.,  
Robin Vowels,  
Denise Young,  
Doug Sherman.

Doug Sherman provided camera-ready copy for his article, as did Chips Sowerwine.

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## OFFICE-BEARERS FOR 1984/5

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## The Public Transport Users' Association

The PTUA is a voluntary, non-party political, non-profit organization of public transport users.

Its function is to lobby the Government for a modern, adequate, efficient public transport system. Our plan for improved public transport calls for optimum use of trains, trams and buses in the interests of our scarce fuel resources, and protection of the environment. It also calls for the incorporation of the advantages of the various modes of transport in the most cost-efficient and energy-efficient manner.

The PTUA prepares briefs and submissions, liaises with transport managers through regular meetings, makes representations to the Transport Minister on suggestions, complaints, etc. It conducts media interviews, speaks at public meetings, prepares articles and letters to the press, publishes and distributes leaflets.

### Meetings

Members are invited to attend Council and annual general meetings.

The PTUA council meets on the first Wednesday of each month (except January) at the Presbyterian Assembly Hall, 1st Floor, 156 Collins Street Melbourne at 5.30 pm (Just down from Russel Street). (Please note that there is a mezzanine, and that if you use the stairs, be sure to climb two flights.)

The Annual General Meeting is usually held in July. A public figure is invited to speak. At this meeting, office bearers are elected, annual reports are delivered, and other business conducted.

### Membership

Membership includes regular issues of the Newsletter for the basic subscription of \$5 annually. A concession membership is available for \$3 annually. Those who can afford to are requested to become Donor Members at \$10 per year, or to make donations towards the cost of printing, postage, hire of halls for meetings, and so on. All members have equal status and their category of membership may be changed when subscriptions are renewed.

### Newsletter

The PTUA Newsletter is published by the PTUA principally for its members. The intended readership also includes members of parliament and the press, radio and television. The content of this Newsletter is often of a different kind from what one might normally find in a newsletter. Articles may be informative and/or opinionated and/or have a distinct lobbying bent. This is in keeping with the aims of the Newsletter, bearing in mind its intended readership.

Members are encouraged to contribute articles to the Newsletter. Members may like to offer their help in preparing the Newsletter on a regular or casual basis.

Because a great deal of manual labour is involved in preparing each issue, mistakes occasionally occur. If you should receive a faulty copy of the Newsletter, ring [redacted] and a new copy will be sent.

Address all correspondence to The Secretary, PTUA, [redacted] Glen Iris 3146. Media contact is Dr Doug Sherman, [redacted].

**Cover:** The stark reality of impending closure of Paisley Station, following re-organization in the western suburbs. Most former Paisley users must now use their cars. Story inside. Photo courtesy of John Moss, Footscray Mail.

## REPORT ON MEETING WITH MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT

At 8 am Tuesday, 4 June 1985, I led a delegation of 4 officers of the PTUA to meet with the new Minister for Transport, Mr Tom Roper MP.

The delegation was composed of the President, Dr Doug Sherman, the Publicity Officer, Mr Patrick O'Connor, the former Vice President, Mr Ivan Powell, and myself, previous President, replacing our Secretary, Mr Ken McIntyre, who was unavailable owing to a trip overseas.

Our discussions were full, wide ranging, and frank. On the whole, the Minister did not seem inclined to go out of his way to meet with our point of view. We had an agenda of 10 items, beginning with the question of security. This issue, however, was passed over quickly in view of a successful meeting between some of our officers and the new General Manager of Security. Our officers believe that the new General Manager of Security will be able to make significant improvement on this front. If members feel otherwise, we would like to hear from them.

### PUNCTUALITY

We therefore went on immediately to the question of punctuality. It seemed to us that the problem was more one of cancellation of trains than of lateness. Indeed, we believe that some headway is being made in the question of lateness. The number of cancelled trains, however, seems to us to be unacceptable. We believe that this is owing either to inadequate maintenance or inadequate staff. The Minister dismissed the question of maintenance and most of our discussion turned on the question of whether there were adequate staff to run all the trains scheduled. The Minister repeated several times that there were 2000 more staff than 2 years ago and seemed to be saying that there were too many staff! Not always the right staff at the right place at the right time, he admitted, but certainly not a question in his view of

## MEETING WITH MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Cont.)

staffing as such. We proposed to the Minister that if a shortage of drivers was the problem — and it seems to us that it is the problem, following the early retirement of a number of drivers last year — the MTA might wish to take on former experienced drivers on a contract basis until enough can be trained. The Minister did not seem to take note of this suggestion and simply repeated to us that the MTA ought to be able to solve the problem.

I asked him if he were willing to be quoted on a date by which he thought the problem would be solved; he found this suggestion absurd and was unwilling to nominate any date. But, given that it takes four years to train a driver, we are still unsatisfied that the problem is going to be rectified in the next year or two.

### ASBESTOS

The next item on the agenda was the problem of asbestos in blue Harris trains. It seemed to the delegation that the blue trains pose a continual health threat. We therefore urged the Minister to be certain that the new Comeng trains were coming on stream at the promised rate of one per fortnight. The Minister did not seem to think that this was very important, but underlined that the agreement already signed with the unions includes a clause specifying that all Harris trains will be replaced by Comeng trains sometime during 1987.

We went on to suggest that in view of the increase in patronage which the present Government has achieved — an increase which we indicated we were willing to credit to the present Government — there might be a need for additional train sets beyond those on order. At present there is an order for 95 six-car Comeng train sets, which will simply replace the existing Harris trains and leave the total size exactly as it stands at present. Mr Roper seemed strongly disinclined to envisage any further order of trains, given the cost and the level of interest payments to be made on the funds borrowed to pay for them.

It was pointed out that there was a double standard here in that roadworks on the whole are undertaken with funds on which interest is not payable, while all the public transport capital equipment costs are paid for by borrowing funds, thereby creating a debt servicing problem for public transport authorities.

The Minister replied that there were a number of roadworks which would be funded by borrowing and "there may be more". In general, however, the Minister was pre-occupied with the immediate costs of public transport, and made the comment that only the Ringwood group of lines came close to paying for their running cost.

When I made the point that the incoming Labor Government's decision [not to refurbish the Harris trains, but to replace them with Comeng trains] was probably appropriate and relevant to country trains, and enquired whether there would be new country carriages rather than remodelled Harris carriages, I received a very flat 'no' as my response.

### FAIRWAYS

We then went on to discuss the Minister's suspension of the implementation of the Fairways. Your Association is strongly of the belief that the Fairway system is the only way that surface transport can continue to compete with the motor car and to carry the increasing numbers of passengers who are attracted to public transport. We also believe that the Fairway has shown significant improvement already, even though it has not yet been fully implemented on any one single route.

We showed the Minister figures on the number of trams running more than 6 minutes late before and after the introduction of the Fairway system on the West Preston line (that is, Collins Street trams numbers 9, 10, and 11) which showed that the percentage of trams more than 6 minutes late went down from 65% late to 16% late in the morning peak, and down from 47% late to 8% late in the afternoon peak.

We pointed out that this meant the difference between unreasonable and unacceptable crowding and gaps in service on the one hand, and regular and reasonably fast service on the other. And we pointed out that if trams were able to operate on schedule, there would be an enormous improvement in productivity and thus more people transported at lower cost.

We suggested to Mr Roper that on evidence available to us, he was being advised by people

## MEETING WITH MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Cont.)

who were strongly prejudiced against public transport in favour of the motor car. The Minister denied this with some heat, and suggested that we await an announcement to be made within a fortnight concerning the implementation or otherwise of the Fairway programme. [See elsewhere in this Newsletter for a report — Ed.]

We are hopeful, but not overly optimistic, that the Minister will see the need to ensure reasonable service for surface transport, and will thus implement the Fairway programme which Mr Crabb has to his credit.

### ST KILDA & PORT MELBOURNE LINES

We then went on to discuss with Mr Roper the question of replacement of the St Kilda and Port Melbourne services with "light rail". Members of our Association will be aware that we have proposed since 1982 that the St Kilda line should be extended by a broad gauge light rail vehicle running as a tram across Fitzroy Street St Kilda into Elwood, thus increasing its catchment area, but maintaining the essential connection at Flinders Street, which is one of the attractive features of the line. We have pointed out that travellers in the St Kilda and Middle Park area who wish to travel by tram and go through the central business district have number 10, 12, 15 and 16 trams at their disposal already.

I pointed out to the Minister that according to the figures provided to me in an MTA study, 88% of patrons alighting from trains on the St Kilda and Port Melbourne lines during the morning peak had connected to these trains at Flinders street from other trains. The corresponding figure for passengers embarking at stations on the Port Melbourne and St Kilda lines is that 33% of them continue their journey on trains from Flinders Street.

Taking into account the number of patrons involved — that is, 810 during an average morning peak (7am to 9am) descending from trains at stations on these lines and 372 embarking on trains on these lines — gave a total of 71% of the total patrons of a morning peak (1,173 persons) using the service in order to connect with a train service. We then went on to explain how they would be disadvantaged by the Ministry's proposal to turn these two lines into tram lines, running them off the rail reservation and into the road traffic, using the Spencer Street bridge and running along Bourke and Collins Streets.

"No decision has been made on either of these lines yet." But the Minister's assistant at the meeting, Mr Stuart Joy, Deputy Director of Finance for the Ministry, loudly asserted that the majority of persons residing on these lines wanted to reach destinations along Bourke Street or Collins Street, and both he and the Minister challenged the figures I presented from the MTA report.

Perhaps more worrisome was Mr Roper's aside that the operation of the Port Melbourne line cost \$50 per week for each peak-hour passenger. This sounded distressingly like Lonie logic. We pointed out that the Station Pier redevelopment would involve both housing and a tourist attraction which would undoubtedly increase rail patronage and which would, to be successful for tourists, require an attractive public transport facility. The Minister was aware of these developments, but did not appear to take our point.

### RESTRUCTURING MOTORING COSTS

We then went on to discuss the perennial hardy, restructuring motoring costs.

Members of the Association will be aware that we have for many years supported the 1979/80 recommendations of the all-party committee of the State Parliament on the conservation of energy. We have called for the costs of third party insurance and registration to be changed from fixed annual costs to costs added as a part of taxes on petrol, thus making the person who drives a good deal pay correspondingly more, and the occasional driver pay correspondingly less.

The Minister argued that this was impracticable because those who have to pay more will squeal loudly, while those who pay less will not be grateful to the Government. We pointed out that the question once again involved the double standard between public and private transport, an illustration of which is that the total cost of the loop during ten years of construction has come to \$474 Million, while the losses on third party insurance of the State Insurance Office for the

## MEETING WITH MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Cont.)

financial year 1983/4 came to \$476 Million!

I think it fair to conclude however that the Minister has no intention of altering the present situation. We proposed in addition that the Government look at taxes on parking as proposed by the State Government enquiry into revenue raising, and that it look into maintaining the West Gate Bridge toll at the peak periods, when it would be most lucrative, for one or two years, but the Minister was not attracted to either of these ideas.

We also suggested that the Government might wish to make some input to the tax summit in favour of equitable treatment of those who use public transport to commute, either by allowing them the same deductions as motorists obtained [they can already — Ed.], or by ruling out the deductions which motorist commuters obtained and by taxing the company car.

### BATMAN AVENUE PLAZA

The last major issue discussed was the question of a new plaza at Batman Avenue.

Readers may not be aware that the State Government has commissioned architects Denton, Corker and Marshall — as a result no doubt of their success with the City Square — to draw up plans for a plaza which would replace Batman Avenue, covering the train tracks from Flinders Street, between Swanston Street and the Gas and Fuel building, and descending to the river bank, involving the demolition of Batman Avenue and of the vaults at Princes Bridge.

This plan is, however, moving through the Government, although exact details have not been revealed except by leaks in newspaper stories.

Your Association is concerned that the proposals which seem to involve the truncation of the Batman Avenue trams (numbers 70 and 77) and the 605 and 377 buses somewhere around the Olympic swimming pool, forcing passengers to walk half a kilometre and a climb of three flights of stairs to arrive at Swanston Street.

The Minister himself was by this point intent on arriving at a subsequent meeting on time and did not reply specifically to our anxiety that to take steps in this direction would ruin the tram line. He did not seem to pay much attention to our proposal — already supported by the MTA's inner north regional Advisory Board — to run the Batman Avenue trams up Swanston Street and thus give passengers much more direct access to the central business district. However, Mr Joy said to us, "You can relax". We gathered, however, that he envisaged the possibility that the tram line might be lowered to river bank level and connected to Swanston Street by an escalator. He disliked the idea of connecting the route to Swanston Street because of congestion of trams in Swanston Street, adding that it was proposed to run articulated trams on the east Burwood line. We did not have a chance to point out to him that the East Burwood trams run not on Batman Avenue, but on Flinders Street. We thus remain unsure that the needs for present travellers on these lines will be catered for.

### FARE ANOMALIES

We concluded the meeting with a discussion of fare anomalies, taking up the case of country students, who are forced to pay country fares and who were not eligible for MTA concession fares once they entered the MTA zone. The Minister appeared decidedly unsympathetic to our request, although we pointed out that it involved a comparatively small number of students.

### CATERING

Finally, we raised the issues of the quality of catering on country services and the possibility of a representative of users on the State Transport Authority. The Minister seemed to hold a basically unfavourable view of catering on country trains in itself, although he suggested that discussions were being held between management and unions, with a view to making the service more efficient. He stated that there was already user representation on the STA Board, and did not wish to pursue that question further.

We expressed the hope that we would have another meeting with the Minister before the year was out, and be able to review progress on these and other issues, to which the Minister

## MEETING WITH MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Cont.)

replied in a non-committal fashion, although he certainly did not rule out the possibility of a further meeting.

Your officers are hopeful that the Minister, as he adjusts to his new portfolio, will take a more positive view toward public transport in general. We are sure that he is determined to get the best value for money out of public transport, and provided he applies the same standard to private transport, he will have our support in his endeavours.

*Dr C. Sowerwine*

## TRANSPORT FOR THE DISABLED

A disabled person is placed in an entirely different situation when it comes to dealing with the day-to-day operations of our transportation system. What we take in our stride can become obstacles to others: late and cancelled trains, lack of timely and adequate information on delays, cancellations, change of platforms, and lack of security.

Problems faced by the disabled vary according to the type of disability. Consider, for example, a train trip undertaken by a disabled person confined to a wheelchair.

- If the person drives to a station by car, is there a parking place close to the platform? Not all stations have parking bays reserved for handicapped persons. Even if bays are marked, there is no current policy of policing them to prevent able-bodied persons from leaving their cars in them.
- Ramps leading to the platform may be too steep for a wheelchair.
- Where lifts are provided — as in the case of Museum station — the operating buttons are placed at normal height — unreachable by a person in a wheelchair.
- The station platform may be too low. Even Museum Station platforms — one of the newer stations — were built too low. A person in a wheelchair requires assistance to get into the train.
- On the platform, timetable sheets are posted at normal eye level — a person in a wheelchair has no hope of reading them.

A person with a hearing difficulty has a problem with announcements about cancellations, change of platform and the like. Even those with normal hearing may find announcements unintelligible, let alone the handicapped.

Where information is conveyed via the VDU screens, there is no provision for displaying alterations and cancellations, leaving the person with a hearing disability at a disadvantage.

Persons in wheel chairs cannot travel by tram or bus. Their mode of travel, apart from the train, is by Multi-Purpose Taxi. However, the Multi-Purpose Taxi scheme is showing signs of strain such as:

- Difficulties in obtaining taxis when required;
- Seat belts differ in sizes, resulting in some ending up around the wearer's neck;
- Vehicle maintenance is poor;
- Refusal of some drivers to make short trips;
- Fiddling of travel vouchers.

A special sub-committee of disabled and non-disabled persons should be formed under the aegis of the PTUA to address these problems. We call upon interested persons to contact the PTUA to form such a committee.

In the April issue of the Newsletter, we ran a brief report on the initiatives of British Rail to cater for its disabled train travellers. Similar facilities must be introduced in Victoria, and we must step up our demands for them.

*— Ken McIntyre*



## TIMETABLES & CLOSED STATIONS: TRANSPORT CHAOS IN THE WESTERN SUBURBS

Sunday the fourteenth of April was D-day for major changes to metropolitan rail timetables.

In the western suburbs, the changes involved not only a complete re-arrangement of timetables, but the closure of two more suburban stations to allow the amalgamation of the Altona and Werribee lines. The result so far has been far from impressive — late trains throughout the metropolitan area, excessive travelling times to Werribee, and no service now for Altona North.

The line amalgamation was accomplished by extending the Altona rail line to Laverton. This allows Werribee trains to run to the city via the Altona line, through the new Westona station built at Maidstone Street Altona, and on through Laverton, Aircraft and Hoppers Crossing to Werribee.

According to spokesmen from the Ministry of Transport, the line amalgamation will yield immediate savings of \$8 Million by avoiding the purchase of two trains. In addition, there will be savings in staff and in maintenance. The cost of the line extension and new station was \$6 Million.

### Service Withdrawn

Commencing from the same day, 14th April, travellers to and from Werribee have been forbidden to use the Geelong trains which, until now, provided them with an express service to and from the city. A journey from Spencer Street Station to Werribee which used to take 30 minutes on a Geelong train or 36 minutes on a suburban train now is timetabled to take 42 minutes travelling via Altona.

### Station Closure

The recent closure of Mobiltown railway station combined with the elimination of train services to Paisley station has meant that Altona North residents and workers in the area no longer have a transport service of any sort during evenings. Journeys during the day are possible using the private bus services which operate in the area, but on average a journey to or from a destination outside the area takes 20 to 25 minutes longer than it used to using train services to Paisley station. Mobiltown and Paisley stations serviced essentially the same area; closure of Mobiltown station immediately prior to the bypassing of Paisley station could only properly be described as the left hand not knowing what the right hand was doing.

### Single Line Problems

Further difficulties arise from the timetabling constraints associated with the single line which runs from Mobiltown to near where the Altona line rejoins the Geelong line at Laverton. Trains can pass each other only between Newport and Mobiltown, or at Westona station itself where the single line splits around the platform. They spend a total of 11 minutes on the single line. Twenty-six city-bound trains are timetabled to cross Werribee-bound trains at Westona, and a further 13 cross during the 3½-minute journey from Newport to near Mobiltown.

### Domino-effect Delays

Any delay at all experienced by a Werribee train in reaching Westona delays the city-bound train by the same amount. In the city, nearly all of these trains are sent around the loop to another Western Suburbs destination, or via Spencer Street and Flinders Street Stations to destinations on the Frankston and Pakenham lines. Stopping times in the city are often only 1 or 2 minutes, which means that these delays lead to late trains throughout much of the suburban network.

### Problems Unresolved

The delays, long travelling times generally and the withdrawal of services to North Altona have led to many complaints and headaches for those in the Ministry of Transport and the MET. There is little to be proud of, and the people affected have not received much help from the MET so far.

— K. W. Davies,  
East Malvern.

## RESTRUCTURING MOTORING COSTS

The present transport taxation system discourages the use of public transport. Total motoring costs (including registration and third party insurance) are large, but perceived costs (mainly petrol) are still small enough to encourage car use in preference to paying fares on public transport.

Results: Pollution

High fuel consumption

High Public Transport deficits

Demands for more road expenditure

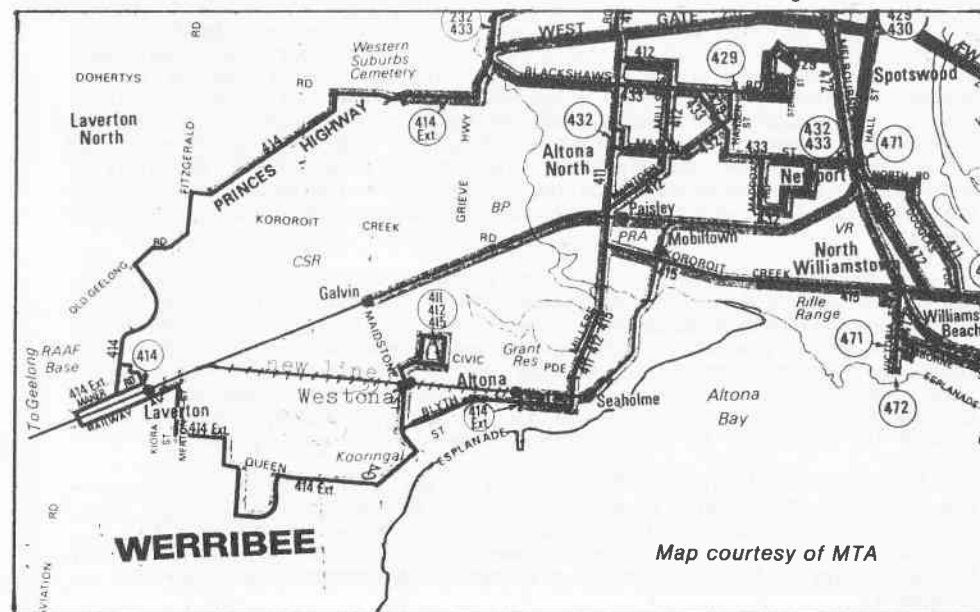
Restructuring the system means the removal of standing charges (notably registration and third party insurance) and their replacement by an equivalent fuel tax. THE AVERAGE MOTORIST'S TOTAL BILL WILL NOT INCREASE!

This proposal was considered in 1979 and 1980 by the Joint Select Committee on the Conservation of Energy Resources from the Parliament of Victoria. After consideration, the Committee expressed the belief that such a move would:

- (i) be non-inflationary in the long term;
- (ii) produce an immediate reduction in fuel consumption;
- (iii) remove the encouragement produced by the present system to amortise high standing costs by the use of more fuel;
- (iv) be an essential first step to motivate the community towards all the other proposed fuel saving options by "making fuel worth saving".

It is not necessary to wait for inter-state co-operation to introduce this restructuring. A border zone of about 50km over which the tax increment grades linearly to zero is sufficient to make it uneconomic to travel interstate to "fill up".

— Dr Doug Sherman



Map courtesy of MTA

## WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE FAIRWAY?

Immediately upon taking office, the new Minister for Transport, Mr Tom Roper, suspended implementation of the fairway pending a review of the program. It now appears that the program will be completed on the West Preston lines (these are Collins Street trams 9, 10 and 11) and that when this is done a further report will be submitted to the Minister. Whether the fairway program continues will depend on this report.

What is involved is nothing less than the capacity of surface transport in Melbourne to cope with the additional patronage generated by recent improvements in public transport, improvements which this Association is happy to credit to the Labor Government. Without the fairway system, trams will simply bog down. With it, there will be very significant improvements.

Improvements have already been demonstrated, even though the fairway program has not been completed on any single route. While Bourke Street trams have bogged down totally under the great increase in patronage since the extension of the line to La Trobe University, Collins Street trams, thanks to tram separator bars, have improved their travel time 25 percent since the installation of the fairway system. More important, however, late running and consequent bunching of trams have been dramatically reduced, as shown by the attached table.

By running trams closer to their scheduled time and by avoiding bunching, the fairway program has significantly improved productivity and reduced costs. Moreover and most important from the user's point of view, the dramatic reduction in bunching means that most users can expect to get a tram without excessive waits and to have a tram which though crowded will not be horrendously overcrowded.

Thus the results of the studies to be undertaken and the Minister's decision are of significant importance to all public transport users and indeed to all those who hope to see Melbourne avoid the Los Angeles model of a city. But the Minister is refusing to accept data from any source other than "independent" consultants who appear to be acting like foxes guarding the chicken coups rather than truly independent consultants. Thus the figures mentioned above have not reached the Minister in any strong form. Indeed, the Minister and his advisers seem to accept on face value information provided by the RACV and the RTA while discounting information provided from public transport sources.

An example of this is that the Ministry seem to have accepted estimates from the RTA that the SCRAM system, linking the traffic lights throughout Melbourne, will reduce motorists' travel times by 10 percent. On the other hand, the Ministry scoffs at MTA studies which show that the fairway has already improved the average trip time on the West Preston trams by 10 percent! Thus a double standard seems to be at work: the same improvement estimated by the RTA for motorists is accepted at face value while a demonstrated improvement of the same order for public transport users is at best ignored.

In the same way, the Ministry justify the C3 or Gardiners' Creek free-way by saying that it will save motorists four to five minutes in travel time. But the same improvement in travel time on Collins Street trams within the central business district, gained by implementation of the fairway and especially by tram separator bars, is ignored even though it represents a 25 percent improvement.

## WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF THE FAIRWAY? (Cont.)

This last point highlights the importance of physical separation of trams from motor cars in the central business district and in wide streets like Nicholson Street and Flemington Road. It is only with physical separation, either by safety bars or, if the motor cyclists prefer, by kerbing as in Nicholson Street, that significant gains can be made for trams on these lines. It is no use having signal priority for trams if the trams can't reach the signals. Similarly, part-time tram lanes are required in some instances so the tram can reach the lights.

A double standard seems to be at work. The RACV have fostered the impression that physical separation hinders motor traffic. In fact, RACV studies have shown a slight but significant improvement in traffic flow, because of improved lane discipline. So in all logic the RACV ought to be among the primary supporters of the program.

Let us hope that the Minister decides to look at the problem from a balanced point of view and not from that of the RACV. We will know within several months and we will keep our members informed on this vital issue, which will determine whether public transport will ultimately succeed or fail in Melbourne.

C. Sowerwine

## FOOTNOTE: TRAMS NOBBLED IN THE STREETS

On the 8th of July, the Government went ahead with its weakening of the Fairway system. This was highlighted by distribution of leaflets on — of all places — trams advising of the routes where fairways currently operate and where it is planned to extend them. The distribution of leaflets on trams is interesting in view of the fact that the intended recipient is a car-driver.

The PR leaflet is just that — a PR stunt produced by the Road Traffic Authority to mis-inform tram travellers into thinking that the Fairway is being "improved". The Age of the 9th July gives the hard facts: *"Some peak-hour tram lanes will be scrapped and sections of other Fairways could be changed or removed if they prove unworkable. Cars will be permitted to 'cross into tram lanes', and trucks will 'be able to cross fairways'"* [Age 9/7/85]. The yellow concrete blocks will be removed and reflective markers will be substituted.

It will cost \$270,000 to publicize the new scheme.

To be fair, the biggest problem with the Fairway system, however, is with the part-time tram lanes which exist on narrow streets such as Brunswick Street Fitzroy where a motorist is confronted with a bewildering maze of solid and dotted lines that criss-cross the road. Such streets tend to be slalom courses requiring the motorist to make criss-cross movements at short intervals. At least, however, a slalom course is clearly flagged — which is more than be said of the part-time Fairway. Accompanied with periods when it is permissible to be on tram lines, and with illegally-parked cars, the Fairway 'package' means that motorists drive on tracks at times when they were not permitted.

In all probability, the solution to the yellow concrete lumps could be a median strip, the purpose of which would be to permanently separate trams from cars. Even with concrete blocks and yellow lines, cars hugging the tram tracks prevent trams from proceeding (especially noticeable in Collins Street).

The presence of Median strips would be a more obvious deterrent to the double-parkers.

— R. Vowels

## PUBLIC ATTITUDES ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT

In 1984 the Victorian Ministry of Transport commissioned ANOP Market Research to undertake a study of community attitudes towards public transport in Victoria. An earlier study in 1982 provides a yardstick for comparisons.

The present study was designed to monitor community attitudes in Melbourne and reactions to recent fare and structural changes.

The study report was completed in January 1984 but the Ministry did not publish the findings of the report, with the intention perhaps of not damaging its election prospects for the March election. The Liberal Party request for this report under a Freedom of Information request was initially refused by the State Government. When legal action was threatened, the report was released to the Opposition.

Some key findings of the study are:—

★ Although there has been an improvement in the perceived standard of public transport in Melbourne, there has been a considerable decline in the perceived performance of the State Government in the public transport area. Fare increases in 1983 associated with the MET is the key issue leading to this decline.

In 1982 the number criticising the Government's performance for fare reasons was 2% of Melbourne's population — in 1983 it was 25%.

It is the State Government and not the respective transport mode which receives the most criticism related to the MET's introduction and related cost increases. Changes to the fare system were perceived by most as unfair and there were increasing doubts concerning the economic benefits of public transport use. The fare changes are seen as both "too much" and unfair, with the greatest resentment coming from the less well-off sections of the community.

In 1982 60% of the public perceived the Government performance in transport as good; in 1984, 49% made a negative assessment of its performance. The key groups who have more negative assessments are those least able to afford fare increases — women; the under-25 age group; lower-income earners; bus and train travellers. The high opinion of the Government in 1982 was because the Government was enjoying its honeymoon with the public, having recently been elected to office on its major positive public transport policies, on many of which they were soon to renege.

There was an increase in the proportion believing that fares had gone up more than the rate of inflation, and a higher proportion believe that increases have been most noticeable across the board in all three transport modes.

There was a decline in the perceived cost benefits of travelling by train versus driving by car, owing to the fare increases. Over shorter distances, a greater proportion believes it is cheaper to drive than to travel by train.

Among the major reasons given for not using any form of public transport by regular non-users was the cost of public transport. Higher costs were mentioned by those believing that the Government has done a bad job in public transport, by low- and middle-income groups and by the under-25 age group.

Cheaper fares was the major specific incentive to the use of public transport by non-users.

★ Those who had a negative assessment of train services cited unreliable, old and uncomfortable carriages and not frequent enough services as their reasons.

★ Tram services were seen by the majority as being good or fairly good.

★ Buses continue to be less well known, with a perceived lack of frequency being the major negative factor associated with buses.

★ Country trains are the least known aspect of the transport system, with 40% considering them fairly good and 46% uncertain about the standard of service provided. Negative assessment was 'old and slow', while positive assessment was 'modern, new and comfortable', and a good mode of transport.

In the overall assessment — *costs have become the major issue of concern to public*

*transport users.*

It must be remembered that in its transport policy on which the Labor Government was elected — 'cheaper fares and a simpler fare structure' was the major promise. The massive fare increases introduced in November 1983 were a betrayal of this promise.

The Government has also to be condemned for attempting to hide from the public a report on public opinion of the Government and financed by taxpayers.

— Ken McIntyre.

## RECENT PTUA ACTIVITIES

Your PTUA executives have continued their busy schedules in the three months to May:

★ Secretary Ken McIntyre and Public Relations Officer Patrick O'Connor attended a public meeting organised by the Hoppers Crossing Ratepayers' Association at Hoppers Crossing on 11 April in connection with transport problems in the Werribee area.

★ On 16 April, Ken McIntyre, Patrick O'Connor and David Bowd met with Transport Shadow Minister the Hon. Ian Smith at Parliament House to revise the public transport situation and to arrange for liaison with the Opposition on matters concerning on-going transport issues.

★ The introduction of the new train timetables on 15th April has proved to be a disaster and Ken McIntyre and Patrick O'Connor covered the entire media with our comments. We have called for meetings with the Minister for transport Mr Roper on this crisis.

★ On the evening of the introduction of the new timetables, Ken McIntyre surveyed train departures at Flinders Street Station for an hour (5 pm to 6 pm) with a reporter from the AGE and The Sun present.

Out of 24 trains, 3 left on time, one was cancelled, and 21 left late!

Mr Roper claimed that teething problems with the new timetables would be settled within a week.

On 23 April we again conducted a survey between 5 pm and 6 pm at Flinders Street Station. Members assisting were Malcolm Higgs, Shalom Keinan, Jim Gordon, Ken McIntyre and Patrick O'Connor. Sun Reporter Adrian Popov was present. Out of 69 trains surveyed, 3 were cancelled, 15 ran on time (22%), and 54 ran late (54%)! We thank those volunteers for their time and assistance.

We request more members to send us diaries of their train travel times for analyses.

Thanks to Nick Neary, a daily commuter from Geelong, we obtained a daily record of train timings between Geelong and Melbourne from 14/2 to 15/4/85. The analyses showed a late running of 89% to Melbourne and 78% in the return direction!

We have continually demanded action from successive Ministers and rail managers over the past nine years, to improve the appalling record of punctuality. It's clear they can't blame the rolling stock any more.

★ On 6 May, Ken McIntyre and Patrick O'Connor met the General Manager of Rail Security. We called for a greater visible presence of security staff on trains, especially late at night and on occasions when large numbers of people travel to/from sports meetings, rock concerts etc.

The problems caused by unruly school children on trains and trams were also raised, and we demanded a blitz on this problem.

The Manager informed of a new outlook in selection of personnel for the Security Force and fresh tactics in dealing with the problems of vandals and unruly behaviour on trains.

• On 4 May, your Secretary was guest speaker at a public forum on *Transport and Disability* organized by Disabled Peoples' International — Victoria, to highlight problems faced by disabled people in their transport needs, and the shortcomings and drawbacks in the public transport services faced by disabled persons.

The PTUA looks forward to forming a subcommittee of disabled and non-disabled persons who will pay particular attention to the public transport needs of the disabled.

★ Recent budgetary initiatives of the USA Government were aimed at cutting back four cross-border AMTRAK rail services between the US and Canada. All members of the International Transport body, with which we have the honour to be affiliated, were requested to protest to the President on these cuts. The letter was acknowledged and passed onto the State Department of the USA for consideration.

— Ken McIntyre

## THE TRIALS OF A TRAIN TRAVELLER

The report in the Sunday Observer on 12 May 1985 of a potential disaster on the Glen Waverley line makes alarming reading.

Mr D.J. Watkins, a traveller on the 5.42 pm train to Glen Waverley related his journey of the 2nd May 1985. We reproduce below and on the next page the relevant part of his letter. The original was sent to the Transport Minister whose reply is reproduced on the next few pages.

*"On Thursday evening [2nd May] I caught the 5.42 pm Glen Waverley train at Parliament Station. This train was excessively crowded to the extent where there was no room for extra passengers (presumably because the previous train had been cancelled). After the train left Burnley Station it rapidly gained speed until by the time it reached the Madden Grove [level] crossing it was travelling at an extremely high speed. Just past Madden Grove there is a slight kink in the line and due to the high speed of the train, it lurched violently and a number of passengers in the crowded train lost balance and fell over.*

*The train leant over as such an acute angle that I thought the wheels on one side of the carriage would lift off the line.*

*In the 8 years I have travelled on the Glen Waverley line I cannot remember being in a train that has travelled around this bend at such high speed.*

*At this point the carriage lights flickered and went out. There was a series of loud crashes as the overhead wire collapsed onto the roof of the carriage and the pantograph smashed against the supports and horizontal steel guide rods. The train stopped approximately 500 metres from Madden Grove where the lights originally flickered and went out. I can only assume that the very high centrifugal forces caused by the train travelling at excessive speed and a slight kink in the rails, caused the leading carriage to lean over to such an angle that the pantograph lost contact with the overhead wire and momentarily rose above the wire. It then swung back with the carriage, and because it was above the electrified wire, sheared off every supporting wire and guide rod in its path.*

*What followed was chaos and reflects seriously on the safety standards of the Victorian Railways. The excessively crowded train was left stranded on the bridge over the Yarra River. The passengers did not know what to do. They had two alternatives: stay on the stranded train or leave it and try to walk to the next station. However, the train could only be disembarked on the Melbourne line side of the bridge. There was the obvious danger of a Melbourne-bound train passing along this track and hitting passengers leaving the stranded train. There was a path running along the side of the bridge, but separated by a high wire fence. However, the fence was too high for many people to climb. Furthermore, it was not known if there were live wires lying beside the train. No advice or assistance was provided by the train Guard or Driver (I didn't see them at all!). Finally, people left the train and walked to Heyington station on the train tracks or the adjacent path. For a long time at Heyington Station nobody knew what to do and the majority of people walked to the nearest tram line.*

Mr Watkins raises several important questions:

1. *Is the Glen Waverley railway track in a safe condition in the area of Madden Grove, Richmond?*
2. *The train involved was a new Comeng train. Why is there no public address system fitted to these trains that can be used by the Guard or Driver in the case of trains breaking down or being delayed by other incidents? P.A. systems can be powered by batteries. Modern gel type lead-acid batteries are reliable and almost indestructible. Surely P.A. systems could be classified as essential safety equipment and should be fitted to all trains.*
3. *During a visit to Brisbane I noticed that their new electric trains were fitted with P.A. systems. They were even used to announce stations!*
3. *Why did the Guard and Driver of the train provide no assistance to the passengers?*
4. *Should the fence separating the railway tracks and the path be so high as not to afford a safe escape route from a train stranded or involved in an accident on the bridge?*
5. *Why did the staff at Heyington Station provide no help or advice to the passengers? I*

## THE TRIALS OF A TRAIN TRAVELLER (cont.)

*presume Heyington Station has a P.A. System and a telephone! Surely they could have told the passengers an emergency bus service would be provided and how long they would have to wait before it commenced.*

6. *How fast was the train travelling when this incident occurred? I presume modern trains are fitted with speed recorders (even old steam trains were fitted with such devices).*
7. *What is the maximum speed allowed on this stretch of track? Namely, the curved track from Madden Grove to the bridge.*
8. *What distance of overhead wire was sheared off?*
9. *Has this incident been investigated by Met Rail and what were their conclusions?*

Mr Watkins also writes of an incident the following morning on the same line, in which passengers again had to leave the train near Gardiner Station and find their own way to work or whatever.

Your Editor would like to raise some questions here.

The bridge in question, like many others in this state, lacks any structure that would keep a derailed train on the bridge. The track itself does not have guard rails. [Guard rails are rails spiked inside the running rails. Their purpose is to prevent a derailed carriage from wandering off the track.] In the event of a derailment, and it seems from Mr Watkins' account that this very nearly was — the train, in all likelihood, would have slipped to one side and rolled off the bridge like a log. The official reason given to the TTA (now PTUA) for not fitting guard rails on bridges is that it makes more work when replacing sleepers. That does not seem to deter New South Wales from installing them not only on bridges, but through stations and other critical places. In fact, the existence of guard rails was claimed to have prevented a derailed Sydney suburban train from falling into the Georges River earlier this year. Do we have to have a disaster like this before this state's railways are made safe?

Mr Roper replied direct to Mr Watkins on 31 May 1985:

Dear Mr Watkins,

### METROPOLITAN TRANSIT AUTHORITY RAIL OPERATIONS

I refer to your letter of 3rd May, concerning train safety and the incidents on the 2nd and 3rd of May, delaying trains on the Glen Waverley line.

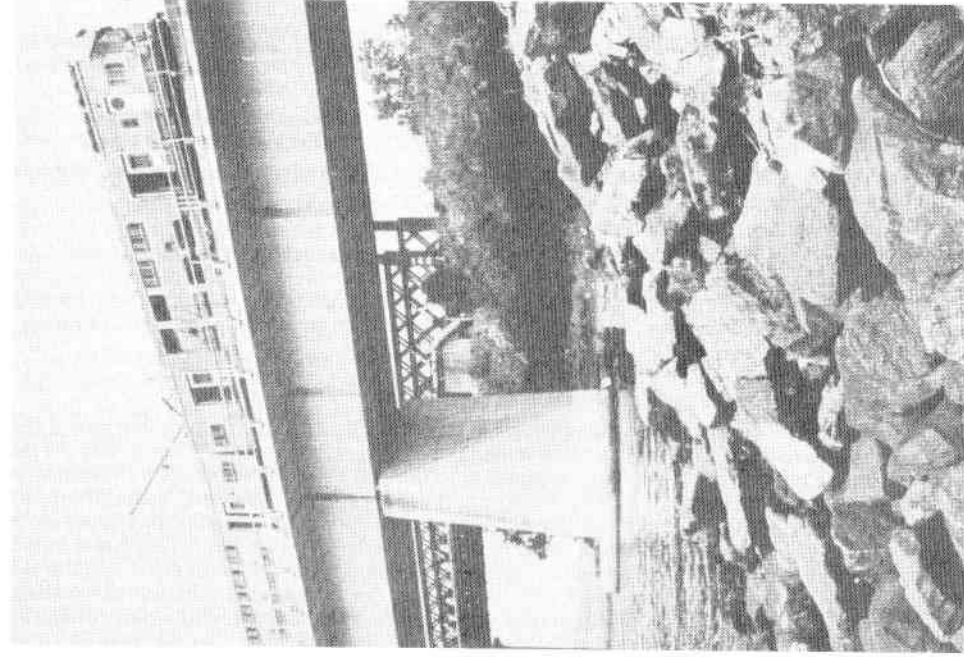
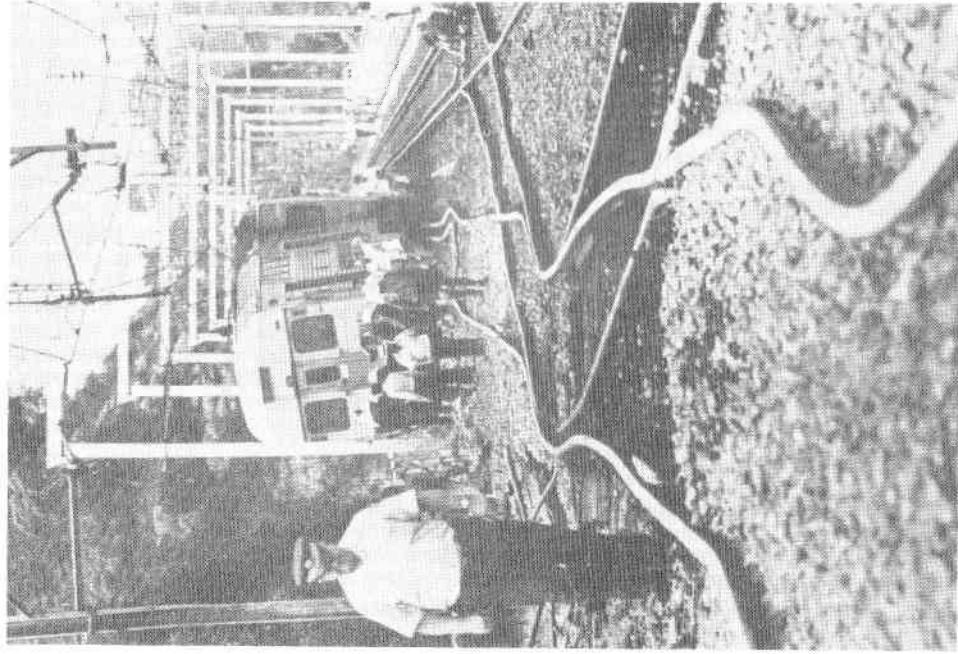
On the evening of 2 May, the train prior to the 5.45 Glen Waverley was cancelled as there was a shortage of train crews due to illness. This accounts for the heavy passenger loading on the train from Parliament [Station].

As is the case with all main line train incidents, an investigation into the cause of the failure at Heyington was carried out. The failure was due to a fatigued component in the overhead wiring. The construction of the overhead near Heyington, described as curvilinear form, was regarded favourably some years ago, due to its lower than conventional overhead installation costs. Experience has shown that it is inherently far less reliable than other constructions, since failure of one component allows the entire wiring between structures to collapse. The \$12 m overhead rehabilitation project introduced in 1984 is designed to address this and other shortcomings in the system. It is not considered that the failure was related to train speed.

Following any disruption, the first responsibility of train crews is to secure the train and protect it in accordance with long established railway procedures. This was done immediately. An operations officer, travelling on the train, assisted in this and went to Heyington Station to ensure that trains on the adjacent line were held clear of the area, to protect passengers alighting from the disabled train. This was arranged through the central operations room (Metrol), and at the same time a request was made for assistance and buses.

I am advised that although the station staff at Heyington are relatively inexperienced, and there were a considerable number of people involved in moving from the train to the station, assistance was given to passengers. Following securing of the train, the crew had taken the





Two views of the Georges River Bridge derailment. That on the left shows the rear carriage of the train resting precariously close to the edge of the bridge. The guard rails can be clearly seen between the running rails of both tracks. According to Railway Digest of March 1965, the guard rails prevented the carriage from dropping into the river. Photo, taken by Peter Gallagher, courtesy of the St George & Sutherland Leader. Right: A view of the trailing carriage from the riverside. Photo courtesy of the Sutherland Shire Pictorial.

**NOTICE OF MEETING**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Annual General Meeting of the  
Public Transport User's Association will be held on  
Wednesday 11th September 1985  
at 5.30 p.m. in the

**BANQUET ROOM**

of the Victoria Hotel, 215 Little Collins Street Melbourne  
(between Swanston & Russell Streets).

The Transport Minister Mr Roper has kindly agreed to  
address the meeting which promises to be interesting.

After the Speaker's address, questions will be invited from  
the floor.

Subsequently, at about 6.30 p.m., the formal business of  
the Association will be conducted, and will include the  
presentation of Annual Reports and the election of Office  
Bearers for 1985/6.

— Ken McIntyre,  
Honorary Secretary

# PUBLIC TRANSPORT USERS' ASSOCIATION

## Discounts on M.T.A. Yearly and Half-Yearly Periodicals

The P.T.U.A. has arranged with the Metropolitan Transit Authority to sell long-term periodical tickets to our members at substantial discounts as set out in the following table:-

Term of Ticket =	Half-Yearly			Yearly		
	Normal Price	Member Discount	Nett Price	Normal Price	Member Discount	Nett Price
TRAINS+TRAMS+BUSES						
Inner Neighbourhood	\$215	\$20	\$195	\$416	\$60	\$356
Adjoining Neighbourhoods	\$277	\$25	\$252	\$540	\$75	\$465
Anywhere in Metropolis	\$317	\$30	\$287	\$617	\$90	\$527

In addition to the above cash savings, these tickets entail the usual fringe benefits which apply to M.T.A. periodical tickets, such as -

- 10% discount at all Paterson and Roger David stores,
- 25% discount at Hoyts cinemas on Sundays, Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays,
- 10% discount on all V/Line extended package tours and V/Line business cards,
- No additional charge to take the whole family (2 adults and up to 6 children) on any mode of public transport anywhere in Melbourne at weekends.

You also have a chance to win a prize in a lucky draw conducted by the M.T.A. each month. Prizes have included a fortnight's trip to Hawaii for two, a microwave oven or a colour T.V. set. Second prize in each draw is renewal of your current ticket for a similar period at no charge.

Tickets are issued for periods of 6 or 12 months, beginning on the first day of the month.

You need to provide a pass-port style recent photo of yourself for identification. This photo will be valid for 5 years. The photo should include a distinct facial image with head and shoulders filling an area of 25mm by 30mm (about the size of a postage stamp). Any B&W or colour photo will do so long as it can be trimmed to the required size by the M.T.A.

Should you lose your periodical ticket, a replacement ticket may be issued for a fee of \$10.

Refunds or credits are obtainable in certain circumstances subject to M.T.A. policies, e.g. -

Tickets no longer required can be surrendered and a refund issued after deducting the value of travel made and subject to a \$2 refund fee.

Allowance may be made for long-term illnesses or injury subject to a medical certificate being furnished within one month.

No allowance will be made for stoppages due to industrial disputes unless the continuous duration is one week or more.

- David Bowd  
Hon. Treasurer  
July 1985

# PUBLIC TRANSPORT USERS' ASSOCIATION

## Application for Discounted M.T.A. Periodical Ticket

### Half-Yearly Tickets

	Nett
Inner Neighbourhood	\$195 (after \$20 discount)
Adjoining Neighbourhoods	\$252 (after \$25 discount)
Anywhere in Metropolis	\$287 (after \$30 discount)

### Yearly Tickets

	Nett
Inner Neighbourhood	\$356 (after \$60 discount)
Adjoining Neighbourhoods	\$465 (after \$75 discount)
Anywhere in Metropolis	\$527 (after \$90 discount)

Please note:

Applicants must be (or about to become) financial members of the Public Transport Users' Association.

Hon. Treasurer,  
Public Transport Users' Association,  
76 Grandview Grove,  
Rosanna,  
Victoria 3084

I wish to apply for a yearly/half-yearly (delete as applicable) periodical ticket for use in the following Neighbourhood(s).

Inner Werribee St. Albans Broadmeadows Greensborough Box Hill  
Moorabbin Dandenong Frankston Ringwood (please circle)

The ticket is required to be valid from the 1st ....., 19...  
(Applications must be received on or before the 5th day of the previous month)

Please find herewith:

- \* Pass-port style photograph (or my M.T.A. photocard is No.....)
- \* Payment for ticket \$
- \* P.T.U.A. annual subscription (if applicable) \$  
\$10 Donor Member  
or \$ 5 Regular Member

Total remittance \$

Please make cheques payable to P.T.U.A.

Please indicate preferred courtesy title,  
e.g. Mr.,Mrs.,Ms.,Miss,Dr.,etc.

Name:.....

Address:.....

..... Post-code:.....

If possible, please provide telephone numbers where you may be contacted should the need arise.

Home:..... Work:.....

DB8507

The PTUA functions through the efforts of willing members. If you feel you have something to contribute, please consider nominating for one of the Office-bearer and/or six Council Member positions. All of these positions become vacant at the Annual General Meeting. The office-bearer positions are: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Public Relations.

Your nomination in writing must reach the Secretary on or before Wednesday 28th August 1985.

Please use this form to nominate candidates for Office in the PTUA for 1985/6:

I, ....., of (address)  
..... hereby nominate  
..... for the position of  
..... at the election of Office Bearers for  
the PTUA for 1985/6.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Post this form now to THE SECRETARY, PTUA, [REDACTED],  
GLEN IRIS 3146.

Dear Member,

The year 1984/5 has not been without its ups and downs.

The negative parts of the rail system have more than re-inforced the need for an organization such as ours.

With all the new trains and equipment which have been brought into service in recent years, we should have one of the best railway systems in Australia. Instead, we have the worst as far as performance goes.

As for the rest of the transport system, our trams and buses can still do with improvement.

We are grateful for your support in 1984/5.

You can help us with your continued support in 1985/6, and with a show of strength by your presence at your Annual General Meeting.

## THE TRIALS OF A TRAIN TRAVELLER (Cont.)

emergency ladder from the crew compartment and were assisting people to alight from the carriages.

In answer to the specific questions in your letter:

1. The track is safe. All tracks are subject to inspection and maintenance cycles to ensure that the condition is appropriate for the line speed.
2. A design for an integrated train radio system, incorporating public address and other communication facilities is being finalised. While public address systems have been considered for some years, it is only recently that a commitment has been given to fit the system to all trains.
3. As I mentioned above, assistance was provided.
4. The installation of fences adjacent to railway lines is determined by a number of factors, such as prevention of trespass etc. On balance, it is considered that the arrangement at Heyington is appropriate.
5. Heyington Station is not fitted with a public address [system] or public telephone. It is desirable that all stations have these facilities, however the installation of public address systems has been progressing through the metropolitan area on the basis of interchange stations and patronage levels. Communication is installed between all stations and Metrol for train operation purposes.
6. Suburban rolling stock is not fitted with a speed recording device. The operation of the train rests with the train crew, with speed control and indication being achieved through trackside speed proving and signalling systems. A speedometer is fitted in the driver's cabin to enable the driver to meet the line speed requirements.
7. The line speed in the vicinity of the curve is 65 kilometres per hour.
8. Six spans of overhead wiring were torn out in this failure, covering approximately 400 metres of track.
9. The cause of the incident was the failure of an overhead wiring dropper, which with curvilinear construction gives both support to the contact wire, and aligns that wire above the pantograph. These dropper wires are solid copper, which fatigue under cyclic stress associated with wind and train-movement-induced vibrations of the overhead. It is due to the fatigue characteristics, that all solid droppers are being replaced during the overhead rehabilitation project.

The incident on Friday the 3rd May occurred due to the tram derailing as it crossed the rail tracks in Burke Road. This was due to an operating error in working the tram derail mechanism, the normal function of which is to prevent trams running into rail gates while trains are crossing.

When failures of the railway occur at peak times, it is extremely difficult to implement contingency plans, due to the very large number of people who may be involved at any one time. At these times, alternative forms of transport are very heavily committed and this, with road conditions, does restrict movements by other modes.

It is proposed that suburban trains will be fitted with a new type of radio system, which will include a facility for on train announcements to be made to passengers.

There is a staff of 156 railway investigation officers policing metropolitan train operations. The emphasis of their activities is on combating vandalism in and around trains, and the system's main control of fraudulent travel is ticket checking at stations.

Yours sincerely,  
Tom Roper,  
MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT

The Editor comments:

1. The Glen Waverley line was completely rebuilt about 10 years ago;



## THE TRIALS OF A TRAIN TRAVELLER (Cont.)

2. The section of track leading into the bend is downhill;
3. The most important question has been left unanswered: what speed was the train going?
4. The evidence about the fatigued spar is inconclusive: It is not doubted that the spar fatigued. Let us assume that the overhead collapse occurred as it was described. The forces that acted as the pantograph overran the overhead could have been the last straw for a fatigued spar, which would then have fractured. There would be no way of telling whether the spar finally fractured just as the train was going under it, or whether it fractured on account of the pantograph riding up.
5. Why didn't the driver use his radio to advise of the problem? Could it be that it was unusable because it uses line power from the overhead instead of batteries? If so, it reveals the shortsightedness of rail planners — a radio would be useless at the very time it is needed most — for the safety of train and passengers (especially in the case of a derailment).
6. The assurances about the track being safe are not convincing in view of the suburban derailments this year, not to mention country derailments.
7. Trains are now (July) going over this section of track sedately; there is not even a hint of a kick from the track. To get the effect described by Mr Watkins, the train must have been going very fast;
8. In the case of the Gardiner derailment, Camberwell tram depot is just up the hill; Malvern tram depot is a short distance away too. One or other of these lines could have provided an alternative to the city or to another train line;
9. The fact that the train was virtually full — at least very much more crowded than it usually is — would make carriages lean over more than they usually would.

## TRANSPORT NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

### CANADA

- A faster Ottawa—Toronto daylight service commenced on 7th January with two daily round trips running the 365km in 3 hours 59 minutes. This represents an overall average of 112 kph (69.5mph), including 5 intermediate stops. The top speed is 152 kph (95mph), and the new schedules were made possible by U.S. \$41 Million track upgrade between Ottawa & Brockville (south of Ottawa).

The faster trip has meant that an extra service is offered each way per day. One of the services replaced — a bus/train combination — previously took 4¾ to 5 hours.

- VIA RAIL Canada has decided to continue its overnight service between Ottawa & Toronto in addition to offering the upgraded daytime service.
- Faster summer transcontinental schedules were due to come into operation on 1st June to take advantage of the scenery between Banff (Ottawa) and Golden. The new east-west schedules enable the best scenery to be taken in daylight. The faster times have enabled direct subsidies to be reduced by a phenomenal U.S. \$7.1 Million.
- At the same time, the Montreal—Ottawa—Sudbury line and the Edmonton—Vancouver "Super Continental" link have been restored. West-bound departure times are, from Montreal, 10.30am and, from Toronto, 1.30pm arriving Vancouver on the west coast at 8.30am on the fourth day. One night is cut out by the faster journey. The return trip departs Vancouver at 3.35pm arriving 7.15pm at Montreal and 5pm Toronto on the fourth day.
- The Atlantic service, Montreal—Maine—St John—Halifax (Nova Scotia) was to be restored from 1st June, departing Montreal at 8.15pm arriving Halifax at 5.20pm the next day. Connections with other services en route are to be made.

— Compiled by R. Vowels

## TRANSPORT NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD VIA RAIL CANADA SHOWS A PROFIT

VIA RAIL Canada Inc. is the Federal corporation which manages Canada's passenger rail services. Within its scope, VIA RAIL offers inter-city, transcontinental, regional and remote rail services to Canadians from coast to coast.

VIA RAIL's Annual Report for 1984 shows another year of progress, the system showing a profit of \$1.57 Million for the year ending 31 December 1984.

The railway operates on the theme *Customer service is our business*, and its good customer service program generates a renewed feeling of pride and involvement among employees.

Its management sees modern maintenance procedures, techniques and facilities "as essential ingredients in the rebuilding of VIA RAIL — whether equipment is old or new". Good employee morale and good employee communications are considered important at VIA RAIL.

VIA RAIL publishes statistics of its passenger operations, including *average occupancy*, *passenger miles per train unit*, and *passenger revenue per mile*. Key statistics for VIA RAIL's operations in 1984 are given in the table below.

	1983	1984
Passenger revenue	\$173.325M	\$177.041M
Total revenue	\$645.713M	\$598.883M
Total expenditure	\$642.526M	\$596.093M
Net income	\$1.622M	\$1.574M
Total passengers carried	6,734M	6.961M
Total passenger miles	1,556.381M	1,533.567M
Passenger revenue per passenger mile	10.8c	11.3c
Train miles operated	231M	220M
Average occupancy	52.6%	53.7%
Average number of employees	3,474	3,653

— Source: VIA RAIL Annual Report 1984

For years we have demanded that Victoria's rail managers provide meaningful statistics of their passenger operations in its annual reports. The MTA annual report for 1984 devoted one small corner of a page containing only nine items.

— Ken McIntyre

### HANDY HINTS DEPARTMENT

#### Speeding up your Melbourne—Sydney trip.

If you are travelling by train from Melbourne to Sydney and wish to leave Melbourne **after** normal work hours and arrive **before** the working day begins in Sydney, there is a faster alternative to the Southern Aurora and Spirit of Progress trains.

Just catch V/LINE's 5.20pm Monday to Friday intercity train from Melbourne and arrive Albury at 9.15pm — change trains and depart Albury at 9.30pm on the South XPT, arriving Sydney at 5.30am. Total travel time — 12 hours 10 minutes.

This compares with 13 hours on the Aurora, 14 on the Spirit, and 13 [actually 12 — Ed.] on the fastest coach.

There are two catches — no equivalent southbound service (the South XPT arriving Albury after the morning Melbourne train has departed), and the high XPT fares. The economy Melbourne—Albury fare, \$19.95, plus the Albury—Sydney XPT fare, \$53.50, totals \$73.75. The economy fare on the Spirit is \$56.00, while Greyhound's "5 Star" coach costs \$39.00, and VIP's coach is \$25.00.

— Extracted from Media Release — Newsletter, Action for Public Transport (N.S.W.), February 1985

## RAIL SERVICES IN CRISIS

Victoria's rail services are notorious for their unpunctuality and inefficiency. Each day, services are marred by record levels of delays, failures, cancellations and breakdowns; this degree of unreliability has been the major cause for the massive declines in patronage by over 38% since 1970, which was only arrested in 1983.

By all the laws of logic, our rail services today should have a better level of punctuality and efficiency compared to 1980 for the following reasons:-

- The train fleet then was comprised of a high percentage of vintage red rattlers. These have been replaced with brand new Comeng trains;
- Then, all suburban trains had to commence or terminate their journeys in the city at Flinders Street station. With the completion of the underground loop, trains can call in at the five stations and continue onto another line without having to terminate in the city;
- A \$10 Million computerized signal system was installed in 1984;
- A three-fold increase in the number of managers at a cost of more than \$10 Million.

Yet it seems that punctuality and efficiency today is worse than it was ten years ago. The paying public are demanding to know the reasons.

On 15th April, a new timetable was introduced which rail managers claimed had been a year in preparation! The new timings have been proved to be a disaster, and Government members of parliament have demanded that they be revised immediately.

Melbourne has the fourth-worst levels of smog in the world. Motorists are being hit with petrol price hikes that will make many of them consider using public transport. But with the daily shambles that marks our transport services, which sane person will use the system?

When in opposition, the ALP claimed it had all the answers on the public transport problem. Since coming to office, the disasters have become worse — derailments, ripping down overhead wiring, and so on.

The situation has reached a crisis stage and the users are not prepared to accept the usual stereotyped excuses — users demand answers and results.

The new Minister must take control of the situation. He will find that public transport users will not wait as long for trains, trams and buses — the alternative is easily available — the car, bicycle, or walking.

— Ken McIntyre

## EXCUSES EXCUSES EXCUSES (& MORE EXCUSES)

We have been served up another litany of excuses for the stream of late trains, breakdowns and so on. We would have thought that they'd have run out of excuses and knuckled down to the task of getting the railway system working. The excuses are appallingly bad.

1. Continual problems with the overhead. "In many cases the lengths of [overhead] line were spliced together with wood, a cause of numerous power failures." [Age 10/5/85] The Government/MTA has had 3 years to rectify weak spots in the system. Now it dredges up this absurd excuse [When are we going to get reasons instead of "excuses"?]. **How much effort would it really have taken to replace a few bits of wood in the overhead? Three years is asking us to swallow a bit much.**

The MTA suggests that the age of the overhead (60 years) is a factor. Granted, but not all the system is 60 years old.† Failures have occurred in quite recent installations. And fatigue failures of the kind suggested as the cause of the Glen Waverley incident [see elsewhere in this issue] can be detected by routine inspection. *It's a question of maintenance.*

2. "Electricity substations could not always cope because the extra power drains of new

† Apart from the recent new sections — the loop and Jolimont and West Melbourne, Werribee and so on — a fairly sizable proportion must have been ripped up (or is it 'have fallen down') over years of incidents. How much of it really is 60 years old?

trains with airconditioning and power doors **had not been taken into account**" [our emphasis]. [Age 10/5/85]

The power requirements of doors are negligible compared to traction requirements. In any case, they are operated only while the train is stationary and not while drawing traction power.

The key point was that they built all these new trains without realizing the extra drain on the power supply. **Did they really?** Ho Hum.

3. A third excuse for late running, the MTA whines, is that the Ministry built a single line from Altona to Laverton. [Age 10/5/85] The operating mess is of the MTA's own making — in attempting to operate a main-line service on single track when it has a double-track main-line alternative. [See separate report on Altona line, *Timetables and Closed Stations*.]

*It all boils down to inadequate planning and co-ordination of Government, the former VicRail and the current MTA — a point the TTAIPTUA has been making for years.*

## RUBBING IN MORE SALT

As if it wasn't enough that Melbourne's commuters have had to run the gauntlet of inept management (like giving riders little and no notice of changed travelling arrangements), staff shortages (resulting in cancellations), breakdowns of trains and overhead, and strikes, the ARU has inflicted the public with the third bout of industrial action in as many months — again over trivia, and again over nothing to do with the metropolitan services.

An earlier strike on 28 March was over the use of rail tractors to shunt freight wagons in Maryborough [April Newsletter]. More recently, in June, a black ban on trains in Jolimont prevented (working) suburban trains from being brought into service [Age 7/6/85]. This ban was imposed to support a strike by AMWU workers who effect repairs to metropolitan trains. This action severely inconvenienced travellers for two weeks [Age 13/6/85]

Lately, a dispute erupted between V/LINE (country division) and ARU over a disability allowance of \$11.80 [Age 10/7/85]. The allowance was recently won for locomotive maintenance crews; now the union wants that fee paid to maintenance assistants. Of course, assistants should not be paid the same allowance as their more-experienced superiors.

Not getting its way, the union irresponsibly escalated the dispute, which then affected metropolitan services. Churlishly, even arrogantly, the union retorted: "Reluctantly, [the union] can see this dispute escalating".

It is only four years ago that the union fought tooth and nail over the threatened and actual closures of services, claiming that the community should first be consulted before closures.

Now, in a juvenile display of muscle, it kicks out at its own customers — the very ones they fought for then, and without whom they would have no jobs — undermining the work they so valiantly performed four years ago.

The union knows that there are more effective methods than strikes that hit at the commuter. They also need to know that money doesn't grow on trees. It needs to take a more conciliatory attitude. The answer can be seen in negotiation.

Where there are genuine grievances that management will not address, there is recourse to the Government. And when avenues through the Government fail, the union can make its voice heard through soft lines (such as arranging not to collect fares, free passage of goods, and so on).

Strikes such as this which cannot be justified no matter how you look at it don't receive one milligram of sympathy from the public. Arrogation will never win friends; the action is to be deplored.

It hasn't occurred to the unions that its customers can go on strike too. Only the unions won't hear directly from their customers. There won't be any bargaining; there won't be ambits, sweetheart deals or anything like that.

When users go on strike, they stop using services permanently. And all the unions will hear about it will be in the annual reports and in demands for more roads. Users have had it up to here [Ed. places open hand at neck level].

— R. Vowels

## TRUCKIES GUN FOR WEIGH MACHINE

TRUCKIES want to destroy a \$70,000 weighing machine which they fear will be used to catch overloaded vehicles.

But a spokesman for the Department of Main Roads said the machine has nothing to do with truck loads.

The head of the department's engineering section, Dr Gavin Donald, said: "We've heard that truck drivers have a contract to destroy the machine."

"We've also heard there will be some sort of award or honor for whoever destroys it."

He said the weighing system, the DAW 200, would be used only to measure the performance of different road surfaces.

"It has nothing to do with the weight of truck loads."

But a private truck owner said many drivers believe the machine will eventually be used to check for overloading.

"They (the DMR) have to pay for the machinery somehow. Maybe they'll get the money through fining truck drivers", he said.

"And anyone in the trucking game knows you've got to overload a bit if you want to make a go of it."

"It is possible that if the DMR start using it to catch truckies for overloading, the truckies may do something to the machine."

Another truck driver who operates in Sydney's western suburbs said: "Truckies who know about it are very worried and there's every chance in the world they'll do something to it."

The DAW 200 is installed under Rooty Hill Road at Flemington in the outer western suburbs.

— *Extracted from the Daily Telegraph, 12 April 1985*

## TRUCKIES OVERLOAD WITH IRRESPONSIBILITY

The above *Daily Telegraph* news item is reproduced in the hope that it will highlight the irresponsible attitudes that are prevalent in sections of the road transport industry.

The quote, "anyone in the trucking game knows you've got to overload a bit if you want to make a go of it" is a damning indictment of road transport's regard [disregard? — Ed.] for road safety, and adds to the mounting evidence that trucking interests are not at all concerned about meeting the costs of repairing road damage which they inflict on roads.

Although the views presented in this news item are those of some Sydney western suburbs truck drivers, A.P.T. wonders whether large road transport companies (e.g. TNT) and other groups such as the Australian Road Transport Federation would care to comment on the truck overloading issue. The truck drivers quoted in the news item had no reservations about publicly stating that they would like to "destroy" the D.M.R.'s \$70,000 machine. This again paints a picture of an industry which is willing to break the law and endanger property and life to protect their own interests. The road transport industry will have to do a little better than display "truckies support spastics" on the rear of trucks if it is to improve its public image.

— *Extracted from Media Release — Newsletter, Action for Public Transport, May 1985*

## THE NEWS BEHIND THE NEWS

Tenders have been called for up to 150 new single-decker buses.

The buses are to provide 40 more buses for the Melbourne—Brighton bus line (recently bought up by the Government), for a number for bus services around Melbourne, and to replace 30 ten-year-old buses which are "too expensive to maintain". [This reason doesn't seem plausible — Ed.]

The tender itself has been put rather curiously. The successful tenderer is to supply 50 or 100 or 150 buses. If at least 70 buses are required (40 for Melbourne/Brighton and 30 replacement buses) why call tenders for 50 buses?

— *Source: Age 4 & 5/6/85*

## BURIED TREASURE

Yo Ho, me hearties. V/LINE has announced that it is receiving submissions on its draft 5-year plan for country railways. V/LINE talks of a "wide range of initiatives for improving productivity and services needed to make the authority cost effective through the 1980's". This little gem was buried on page 153 of the *Age* of 13th July, where everyone would be sure to see it.

Submissions are required by 15th August 1985. To obtain a copy of the draft plan, write to John Close, V/LINE Corporate Planning & Development Division, 15th Floor, 589 Collins Street, Melbourne 3000.

Readers might be very disturbed at some of the aims of this exercise. For example, one of the aims is to "run services by the most cost-efficient mode where substantial savings can be achieved". The report notes that cost recovery of country services is only 25%, while V/LINE's "aim" is to make this 50%. If that doesn't sound like replacing trains with buses again, we don't know what does.

Other samples from V/LINE's stock of bankrupt ideas include:

*Rationalize* [our emphasis], co-ordinate and improve the efficiency of existing services and introduce new services that capitalize on market opportunities. [The latter part of these objectives doesn't sound too bad, but it's that opening word we don't like].

*Rationalize* overnight sleeper service between Melbourne and Adelaide, but provide an additional daylight service between Melbourne and Adelaide.

"Reschedule" the existing Melbourne — Sydney rail services in order that a day and night XPT service can be implemented. [That means cut out the Aurora and Spirit.]

Real fare maintenance by periodic increases at least at the rate of increases in the rail cost index, plus a 5% per annum patronage increase. [That is on top of a 100% increase in fares over 5 years in order to meet their 50% cost recovery objective. As the Rail cost index is usually greater than increases in the CPI, the effective cost increases would be at least 150% over the next 5 years.]

These titbits, along with others, are what the report refers to as "a selection of qualitative and quantified strategies".

*These aims must be seen against a background of quiet downgradings of the rail system.*

We have already reported that trains on the Bacchus Marsh and Kyneton lines have been replaced by buses, on a regular basis, and under the guise of "staff shortages" [April Newsletter]. We have heard that V/LINE want to be rid of the overnight Mildura service. They already run a daylight bus there. You have heard of the plan to get rid of the Aurora and Spirit on the Sydney to Melbourne run and to "refurbish" the Aurora and to make it a businessman's train, putting the fare beyond the reach of the average traveller. Newsrail of July 1985 reports of deteriorating track conditions of country lines, following removal of local gangs of fettlers and of their replacement by flying gangs and modern machinery, which make infrequent visits to repair track. Newsrail reports of new derailments on the Orbost line and of the imposition of lower speed restrictions on that line. They report of similar downgradings of the Timboon, Skipton and Myrtleford lines.

To add to this scenario, the Transport Minister Mr Roper has declined to give assurances on the future of grain railways in the Wimmera-Mallee. He could not provide "a clear commitment to long-term retention of the lines." Thirteen such lines are involved. [Newsrail, July 1985] We are told that the newly re-opened Stony-point line is operating with a 10% cost recovery, but by all accounts the service is well-patronized. The problem here would appear to be over-manning — does it really take a driver, guard and conductor plus a number of signalmen to run a single-car train?

Then we understand that the plan to build a second generation of high-speed country carriages to augment the existing N-cars has been scrapped. This project got to the stage of detailed construction plans.

— R. Vowels

## MORE WORKERS TRAVEL BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Figures released by the Transport Ministry months ago contradict its own survey reported in the Age on 8th July.

The former Transport Minister Mr Crabb had claimed that public transport usage had increased by such an extent that it was the best for 15 years. However, results of a survey commissioned by the Transport Ministry and the MMBW suggest that use of public transport by workers has declined from 25.8% in 1970 to 12.5% in 1984. The Age says there "has been a tremendous exodus from public transport". It says: "Compared to 1970, only half as many people now catch trains, trams or buses to their jobs".

It would seem that the survey was not representative enough, and apparently surveyed in the wrong areas. For if usage has been cut by half since 1970, who is using public transport during the morning and evening peak periods — certainly not fairies. Trams, certainly, seem to be nearly almost as crowded as they were then [in 1970]. And, as the government has already stated, usage is the best for 15 years. This puts the lie to the more recent figures of 1974. Since the 1974 figures were taken, usage of public transport, so the Ministry of Transport survey goes, has fallen from 20.0% to 12.5% — that is, usage has dropped by 40%. That figure is utterly absurd too.

We can only repeat that the basis of the survey was not representative. The findings are utterly wrong. For not only in the Metropolitan area, but also in country Victoria has patronage increased.

Finally, let it not be forgotten that it is only 5 years ago, peak services on tram routes were cut, along with Saturday Morning services, and have not been restored following the consistent increase in patronage over the past three years. And a restoration of Sunday train services, also cut about a decade ago, has not occurred either.

— R. Vowels

## BROKEN PROMISES

Prior to the April election, the Government promised to extend the travel time by one hour to three hours for a Neighbourhood ticket in all Neighbourhoods except the Inner Neighbourhood.

The MTA printed 50,000 booklets telling how to make the most of the MET. The booklets contain information on the new 3-hour Neighbourhood ticket.

The booklets, believed to have cost \$25,000 to produce, are gathering dust.

According to *The Sun* of 8 May, a spokesman for the Transport Minister, Mr Roper, said that the Government's first priority was to get trains running on time. "The pamphlet is not being distributed until the new time schedule is implemented", he said.

If we have to wait for trains to run on time before the booklets are distributed, we may never see them. However, it is quite clear that the Government has no intention of honoring its recent promise, and to say that it has to wait for this or that timetable is positively ludicrous, as the benefit is entirely unrelated to timetables, routes or anything else.

## TRANSPORT MINISTER TO ADDRESS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We are pleased to announce that Mr Tom Roper, Minister of Transport, has kindly consented to address the PTUA Annual General Meeting, to be held on Wednesday 11th September at 5.30 pm.

## NEWS FROM INTERSTATE

The following snippets have been extracted from the *Media Release Newsletter* of Action for Public Transport (NSW branch), February 1985, as it is thought to be of interest to our readers.

### How the others see us:

On the eve of the Victorian election, Premier Cain has 'done a Wran' by promising XPT trains to Melbourne by June. V/LINE is actually accepting bookings — but when APT [Action for Public Transport] asked for information about fares on the XPT we were told "they haven't been announced".

This could be interpreted as 'they will change'. No prizes for guessing that the economy fare scale will disappear! Wake up Victoria! [We covered this point adequately in the April PTUA Newsletter — Ed.]

George Orwell's predictions for 1984 were, in most cases, wide of the mark. However, his forecast that the 1980s would be an era of bureaucratic 'newspeak' was indeed correct if we examine a few of the utterances from the NSW transport bureaucrats during 1984.

The title *Newspeak* of 1984 must go to the SRA's denial (*Sun-Herald*, 29.7.84) that the XPT was always intended to be a two class, two fare train (first and economy) until a last-minute political decision turned it into a one-class expensive fare train.

Most students of NSW transport know that the SRA's own carriage coding, B for first class, F for economy, indicates that the XPTs were originally built for two classes of seating. Full marks to the *Sun-Herald*'s Gavin Gilchrist who, after having one SRA spokesman deny the two-class concept for XPTs, found two other sources who confirmed the two-class coding, supporting the contention that the trains were originally designed to offer economy fares, not the elitist, expensive fares that we have today.

Other awards go to the SRA for using the word *adjustments* (to services) when they mean *cuts* or *cancellations*, and to the Federal Government for describing the Alice Springs — Darwin railway as 'independent', when it was carried out by the SRA's David Hill, a close political friend of the Premier, and in turn the Prime Minister, who had made it clear that he didn't favour the railway.

## CUTS TO LONG-DISTANCE TRAINS

The [NSW] State Government is considering cutting out all intrastate overnight passenger trains except those serving the North Coast.

There can be little doubt that long distance passenger trains will almost disappear in the near future, to be replaced by buses. The Minister for Transport favours it — the powerful Transport Workers' (bus drivers) Union would like it and the rail unions, who would seem to have most to lose, are fiddling like Nero in loco cabins while the Rome of the rail network disintegrates around them.

Three recent enquiries will have a bearing on the future of these trains; the House of Reps. Standing Committee on Road Safety is looking at coach safety, the Russell inquiry looked at the NSW bus industry, and a review of state airlines is due for completion by July '85.

Consumer preference is probably evenly divided between buses and trains [APT haven't done their homework if they don't know that, given the choice, passengers favour the train — Ed.], but the public deserves a say in other important matters before country travel is handed over to the private bus industry "on a plate". They include safety and comfort. Given the road toll of over 1000 a year in NSW is it reasonable to ask train travellers to risk their lives by having to share the roads with unprofessional, if not incompetent, drivers? So far as comfort is concerned, there are not many buses around offering sleeping berths, civilised dining facilities, or effective non-smoking accommodation [or hot showers — Ed.].

## SWISS MOVES

The Swiss Government has recently moved to make its rail services more attractive.

Taxes have been imposed on heavy road vehicles and vehicles using motorways; maximum road speeds have been reduced, and a proposed 3% increase in rail charges has been forgone. The moves are seen as conservative measures to reduce road traffic, exhaust



## NEWS FROM INTERSTATE (Cont.)

pollution and acid rain. APT is encouraged that at least one country understands the community benefits of increasing the funding of railways, particularly at the expense of competing transport modes which have a greater environmental impact, so that fares and charges remain attractive to users.

### PUBLIC TRANSPORT A "VACCINE" FOR THE ROAD TOLL

A Californian pediatrician has advocated public transport as part of the solution to 'the pathogen we call the automobile', the leading cause of death for children and young adults aged one to 24.

'A wall of blind indifference prevents the development of a superior public transit system that could provide a life-saving escape route, reducing fatalities and injuries [by] more than 50% within one year', says a Beverley Hills GP. He said that buses on roads are 250 times safer than cars; trains are 72 times safer than cars; domestic airlines are 33 times safer than cars and local transit is 5200 times safer than cars.

Americans suffer 22 million auto crashes annually, killing 52,600, injuring 4 million, and permanently crippling 500,000. (*Passenger Transport* 7/84)

The following is extracted from Action for Public Transport's Media Release — Newsletter, May 1985.

### BARRIE HAS THE RIGHT WORDS . . . . .

In [Sydney's] North Shore Times of 19 April, Transport Minister Barrie Unsworth was quoted as saying the following:

On planning for a population of four million in Sydney, he said: *"I don't believe the answer to the extra traffic this will create lies in another harbour crossing. Rather we should design more efficient public transport systems, educate the public into using them and, at the same time, reduce pollution levels, etc, to make life more pleasant for everybody."*

On moves to reduce the Harbour Bridge toll, he said: *"It should go up, not down, particularly for those people carrying less than three passengers in their vehicles. To reduce the toll, or eliminate it, is just asking for more single-driver only cars on the roads. That is just what we don't need."*

### ODD SPOT

Melbourne was host to the 10th Australian Transport Research forum on 13th to 15th May 1985. One of the topics discussed was "Running the trains on time".

## MELBOURNE NEWS-N-VIEWS

### WRONG WAY — GO BACK

The 12.04am train to Hurstbridge finished up in West Melbourne on the wrong line. The driver reversed and started again, 40 minutes late.

[*Herald* 28 June 1985.]

### GALLOPING CONSUMPTION

The tentacles of the proposed consumption tax were all-embracing. You may be interested to know that imposition of the tax would have meant that a \$2 Neighbourhood ticket would cost \$2.25, and a 60c two-section ticket would cost 68c. These amounts would have been clumsy to administer, and you can bet your boots that the actual fares would have been \$2.30 and 70c respectively. The effective increases? — 15% and 16.6% respectively.

Fortunately, it seems that transport is to be exempt.

### CHAPEL STREET TRAM WORKS

Road works in conjunction with the South Yarra Project are due to commence in

## MELBOURNE NEWS-N-VIEWS (Cont.)

September, according to the NEW SOUTH YARRA Project Progress Bulletin No. 1 of May. Tram tracks are scheduled to be re-routed in the vicinity of Toorak and River Roads, and widening of Toorak Road was due to commence in May.

In the vicinity of Chapel Street & Alexandra Avenue, tram tracks would be re-routed, if current plans are implemented. Other works relating to the implementation of the Fairway system in Chapel Street and Toorak Road have been agreed to, according to the Bulletin.

### ST KILDA LINE

Bridge sickness has again befallen the beleaguered St Kilda line.

On 23rd June it was noticed that the Albert Park railway bridge has a 15 kph speed limit on it, the same as the Yarra Bridge. On that same trip, the train came to a halt just after leaving Flinders Street for St Kilda. On the return trip, the train again came to a halt just after leaving St Kilda station for the city. It seems that, even with a single train on the line, the MTA still can't run a train properly.

The connecting bus for Beaumauris no longer calls into the station entrance — passengers now have to walk to Fitzroy Street where they are no longer under cover. What a way to run a railway!

### VANISHING TIMETABLES

In the April Newsletter, we forecast that timetables would be in short supply for the inauguration of the new timetables of 15 April, in view of the short notice given the travelling public. This was based on our previous unhappy experience on the introduction of the Neighbourhood scheme.

What happened? Timetables were reported by the press as being unavailable. Our own experience revealed that timetables for only a few of the routes were available from Museum Station on the Saturday prior, nor were the missing timetables available from Flinders Street Station.

Many commuters took the train to Flagstaff station, shown on the schedules to be open, only to find that their train raced past. The MTA had neither the wit nor the sense to inform the public that the station would not be open for some weeks.

On Saturday 18 May, we called into Museum station on the expectation of picking up a Sandringham train, which was supposed to be using the loop. As there was no VDU displaying information about the Sandringham line, we enquired at the gate when the next one was to depart. 'Just take any train to Richmond' was the reply. That was all very fine, but we needed to know if it was timely to connect with a train to the sandy shores. If we just missed one, we wouldn't want to hang around for ¾ of an hour for the next one. They couldn't tell us. They didn't even have a timetable for themselves, let alone one for us! And that was in May, one month after the new timetable came in!

Anyway, we decided to take the tram to Flinders Street. There, the clock showed that it was a 50-minute wait to the next train, so we took a tram instead, and walked the rest of the way. Later that night, we called into a suburban station for an elusive timetable, and there found that frequency was half-hourly; the clock at Flinders Street had been wrong.

If you want to go by train, you either have to have rocks in your head or rocks in your wallet.

### MMBW Amendment 317

**VFL PARK Extension:** It is proposed to extend seating capacity at VFL Park from its present capacity of 76,000. A proposed extension to the Grandstand will seat an extra 6,000 fans, bringing the capacity to 82,000. And still no real public transport there!



## LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS

In an era of modern communication systems and technology, is such a simple solution too much to ask?

— Gerard Schembri  
Box Hill.

### TRANSPORT SEMINAR

Sir,

While not wishing to detract from the excellence of your report on the Transport Seminar at RMIT on March 22, I should like to reinforce, as one who was also at the seminar, the dismay that any who appreciate public transport would have felt.

Quite staggering was the timidity of those representing the Transport Ministry, while most of the speakers had their heads firmly in the sand in their refusal to comprehend the clear fact that putting more cars into Melbourne only further escalates the problem.

Two points: while your report rightly highlights the negative contribution of Prahran's Mayor, it fails to note Prahran Council's refusal even to consider the Fairway system. I firmly believe that not one of our 12 Prahran councillors understands the Fairway system, yet all act on a knee-jerk reaction engendered by the way their own lives are automobile-centric, and the ridiculous RACV misinformation campaign.

Prahran's Mayor airily dismissed the contribution of those councils who were acting to protect their residents, saying that since Prahran already had four tram routes and three railways, its problems were not public transport.

Clearly Prahran has no comprehension of the need to adjust these public transport systems which still operate almost exactly as they did 50 years ago — except that from my home 50 years ago it was eight minutes to the city by either tram or bus, but at peak hours now you would be lucky to do the same journey in less than 30 minutes, even given faster vehicles.

What is important, apart from the urgent need to give Chapel Street and Toorak Road the Fairway system, is a hard look at updating rail station provisions.

Thus the South Yarra station, a major interchange station, should be shifted from its present position north of Toorak Road to just south of Toorak Road. If the problem of track curvature on the Caulfield lines makes it impossible to move the platforms nearer Chapel Street, the potential traffic would fully justify a moving footpath system to deliver train passengers to Chapel Street at the Jam Factory.

Comment is also called for on the submission by the John Connell Group on the Domain tunnel which the seminar seemed to believe was inevitable.

The mere \$130 million scheme (environmentally acceptable) would surface below the Myer Music Bowl and necessitate major intersections of the "freeway" with Alexandra Avenue and Batman Avenue as well as another Yarra bridge. (Bridges apparently improve the environment.)

We were then told that for an additional amount the tunnel could go under the Yarra as well, and there was a long fantasy exercise in which the necessary large exhaust chimney from the underground freeway could be disguised to look like the Japanese pagoda in London's Kew Gardens. It would then be an environmental asset, we were led to believe. But there was no mention of how this new freeway construction would link up with the Moorshead overpass at the western end of the existing South-Eastern Freeway, nor any mention of its intersection with the Morell Bridge at Anderson Street. Perhaps the complex clover leaves, interchanges and exit ramps required there would also be environmentally advantageous, and therefore worth spending another \$100 million or so. Then let us not forget that the present South-Eastern Freeway is already operating at capacity for two hours in the morning peak and another two hours at the evening, and we are soon to have this boosted by the C3 link down Gardiner's Creek.

— K. Grover  
South Yarra.

# \* PUBLIC TRANSPORT USERS' ASSOCIATION

ORMOND 3163

\*Formerly Train Travellers Association

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