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TRANSIT NEWS-N-VIEWS

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 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.

John Alexopoulos, David Bowd, Bill Devine, Ken McIntyre, Patrick O'Connor, John Prideaux and Co., Doug. Sherman, Robin Vowels, and Denise Young.
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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 and the like. It conducts media interviews, speaks at public meetings, prepares articles and letters to the press, and publishes and distributes leaflets.

Meetings

Members are invited to attend PTUA Council and annual general meetings.

The PTUA Council meets on the first Wednesday of each month (except January) at the YWCA, Room 10, 489 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne at 5.30 pm.

The Annual General Meeting is usually held in July. The guest speaker is usually a V.I.P. The business segment of the meeting includes election of office bearers and the presentation of annual reports.

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.

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 and a new copy will be sent.

Address all correspondence, except subscriptions, to The Secretary, PTUA, Ormond 3163. Address subscriptions and payments for discount tickets to The Treasurer, Rosanna 3085.

EDITORIAL

Role of the PTUA

Mr Roper has some off-beat ideas about the role of a community group like the PTUA.

During his address to the PTUA's Annual General Meeting in September, he said that the PTUA should offer more constructive help instead of engaging in pie-throwing.

Mr Roper seems to think that the PTUA exists just to throw pies for the sake of throwing pies, or that the PTUA enjoys it.

He has overlooked two crucial facts:

- Back in 1982 in its forward-looking *Transport for the Eighties*, the PTUA launched one of the most comprehensive and constructive plans for the rehabilitation of the sadly neglected public transport system. Many of the proposals co-incided with the Labor Party's promises. Has the Government acted on it? The Government has reneged on promises to extend the railway network.
- The very reason the PTUA was formed nine years ago was that the railway system in Victoria was so bad.

The fact is that the railways in particular have become even worse than they were in 1976. So much so that it is now a running joke. Every day the press carries stories of appalling incompetence and maladministration. The Herald says that Metrail sleeps in on Monday mornings [3/9/85].

What Mr Roper has failed to grasp is that the 1985 recidivism of the railways has taken performance to Titanian depths. Metrail has hit an iceberg and is sinking fast. (And in spite of thousands of millions of dollars poured into new equipment.) While commuters previously might have been just plain crabby, they have become decidedly rovable. And justifiably so. There has been a call for Mr Roper to step down. [Age 13/9/85].

That is the message for Mr Roper from travellers.

We would be *delighted* to have nothing to complain about. We would *love* the problems to go away. In such an event, this Association would cease to have a reason to exist. But while the performance of the rail system in particular continues to become worse, we — the travellers' consumer group — are obliged to be vociferous about our Members' and the public's case. If that makes it hot for Mr Roper, then so be it.

If Mr Roper can't stand the heat from the stove, he'd better retire from the kitchen.

Line Closures

The proposed closure of two tram lines is unthinkable now, as it was five years ago when the Victorian Transport Study recommended the closure of 5 tram lines and 7 suburban train lines.

Then — as now — the proposed withdrawals were the product of mere cost-cutting measures and ignored the enrichment that the particular public transport services bestowed on the community.

The Footscray-Moonsee Ponds tramline serves the shopping centres in both those suburbs. It is a vital spoke in the hubs of major transport interchanges at Footscray railway station and Moonsee Ponds. The route passes a tertiary institute, schools, and Highpoint West shopping centre.

The Prahran-City tram runs the gantlet of the shopping megopolis of Church and Chapel Streets, and links residential areas with the city. How could our transport operators overlook the super housing development at South Yarra, right at their doorstep? The importance of the cross-connections with 9 other tram routes cannot be under-estimated either. Chapel Street trams provide the only means of bringing residents from radial tram lines to the shopping region and students to Prahran College. Chapel Street — like St Kilda Road — contributes to the network by providing mobility across those nine radial routes, a facility without which renders the motor car a far more attractive option.

The community expects more of the Met than a management which views its charge as a sacrificial lamb whose services can be butchered whenever the going gets tough.

The community expects the Met to manage, to improve, and even to extend services.

Melbourne has one of the finest and most extensive tramway networks in the world.

To improve our transport system requires a visionary management that has the will to **maintain what we have and to build on it.**

4 PUBLIC TRANSPORT NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD TRAVEL ON ANOTHER PLANET

My wife Stella and I spent a three-month holiday from May to July stopping in the countries Malaysia, Belgium, Holland, West Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, France and the UK. I took the opportunity to observe public transport services.

The level, standard and efficiency of the public transport services — from the 24-hour-seven-day-a-week tram and bus services in Brussels to the Metro in Paris and the fabulous London Tube — is so high, that compared to Melbourne, it was like travelling on another planet.

The rolling stock — trams buses and trains — is new, clean and free from graffiti and slashed seats and so on that are found in our trains. Pride and civic consciousness in the people is evident everywhere.

Ticketless travel is rare and virtually impossible as automatic ticket sales and validation is the norm. In Switzerland, automatic ticket machines are situated on the pavement near main bus stops. Despite the thousands who use the London underground daily, one cannot pass through a non-automatic gate without close scrutiny of the ticket.

In Rome, lanes are reserved on city roads for exclusive use by buses — despite heavy road traffic. There's a lesson here for Melbourne's road lobby, which is fighting tram priority.

Inter country and intercity travel in Europe is flourishing. On a 2½-hour boat trip down the Rhine at Cologne, I noted nine long-distance trains running between Germany and Switzerland, each consisting of 14 to 20 coaches. In Melbourne we run four interstate trains in 24 hours!

One aspect that impressed me in most European cities was the pride the ordinary people have in their public transport services. On asking for directions, whether it is from the hotel staff, or in the street or from a cop on the beat — in Lucerne, Nice, Paris, London — one is always directed to the nearest train or bus service, and rarely is the tourist told to take a taxi, even when a taxi is nearby. Imagine a Melbournian telling a tourist to travel by train!

Among the suburban public transport systems in the world, the epitome of a good system is to be found in London. The underground or Tube is one of the biggest tourist attractions in that city, and by far provides the fastest means of moving around the city. The services are frequent, with one-minute intervals in peak hours. Backing up this splendid train network is an equally extensive, frequent and efficient bus service covering the entire metropolitan area. Fares are cheap: a £2 daily Travel card allows unlimited travel by train or bus on any zone for a whole day — a real boon for the tourist.

One outstanding aspect of travel by train or bus in London is the courtesy of, and assistance from, the staff — ticket checkers, bus drivers, conductors, inspectors etc. Over 54 million tourists visit London each year, and no finer ambassadors for the country can be found. The West Indian staff were the most efficient and helpful and we could cite numerous personal experiences.

In London I met the Director and staff of the world body of Transport 2000 and the leader of the commuter campaign in the Greater London Council (Nick Lester). We discussed our mutual interest in public transport.

I rode in the driver's cab of a tube train to experience the signalling system. I also visited Guards' and Drivers' depot stations to meet staff and ascertain levels of staff morale. I must say that staff morale is high. Efficient systems are in force for solving even simple industrial problems.

Nowhere on the Continent are the public transport systems hindered or obstructed by strikes or industrial problems. Top managers use the services daily.

In the UK, firm action has been taken by the Government to stamp out industrial strife on the railways. The rail unions were successfully sued for £250,000 damages for a snap one-day strike, and court action was taken to force unions to lift work bans on the introduction of new rolling stock and work practices. Compulsory union membership in the railways has been cancelled. Under the 1984 Trade Union Act, strikes or work bans must be approved by a ballot of all members affected. This ensures the rights of all workers and prevents them from being called out on strike against their wishes by a few union leaders.

In Singapore, a multi-billion dollar metropolitan rail system, with modern rolling stock, signalling and other facilities is nearing completion, and when completed, will revolutionize suburban travel in this modern city state.

5 PUBLIC TRANSPORT NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD (Cont.)

A novel feature of the bus service in Penang is their colour-coded bus system. Buses on each route or service are painted a distinctive colour. This assists the tourist who cannot read the destination boards, and has only to look for the colour of the bus running in his direction.

Compared to Melbourne, the public transport services in European cities are on a different planet. At the present rate, it will take us a century and more to reach their standards.

— Ken McIntyre

RAIL FARE SYSTEMS IN SOME EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

FRANCE: (SCNF – SOCIETE NATIONALE DES CHEMIN de FER FRANCAIS)

France's rail fares are on a par with other European systems. Rail cards and season tickets are offered at two tariff levels — one for commercial and the other for social. Tariffs are fixed for the most part by ministerial decree. Companies can pay half the cost of an employee's season ticket and can claim the payment as a tax deduction.

ITALY: (FS – FERROVIC dello STATO)

Fares in Italy are among the lowest in Europe, almost as low as in Greece. As a result of a deliberate low fares policy, patronage and fares revenue is very high and government subsidy is low.

Because of the low fares, there are very few cut-price offers.

SWITZERLAND: (SBB – SCHWEIZERISCHE BUNDESBahn)

Swiss fares are relatively high, especially over short distances, partly attributable to the high standard of living.

A wide range of season tickets and rail cards is available, and the fare policy is part of a "global transport approach".

SWEDEN: (SJ – STATENS JARNVAGAR)

Sweden's fares have attracted just as much attention as France's TGV.

Since 1979, the country has had a successful history of attracting more rail patronage through lower fares. A 21 % fare reduction resulted in a 20% patronage increase — 61% of new patrons were former car users.

WEST GERMANY: (DB – DEUTSCHE BUNDESBahn)

Fares in West Germany are relatively high, but this is offset by tax-deductible work trips, while the cost of other journeys can be reduced through a wide range of travelcards.

UNITED KINGDOM: (BR – BRITISH RAIL)

Fares in the UK are relatively higher compared to many systems on the Continent.

Sixty-one percent of BR's fare receipts come from regular users by way of season and Saver tickets.

Fares in the London Transport system are relatively cheap. Maximum fare by bus is 30P (60 cents), and the daily Travelcard for £2 provides unlimited travel by train and bus over the entire Underground zones and LRT buses including services outside Greater London and London Country buses.

THE NETHERLANDS: (NS - NEDERLANDSE SPORWEGEN)

Of the countries covered in this review, fares on the NS are the second-lowest — again the result of a deliberately low fares policy.

Widely-used family rail cards and a range of other concessional fare schemes are offered. Like British Rail, NS uses elasticity information to fill off-peak services.

— Ken McIntyre

STRIKE WHILE THE IRON'S HOT OR RUNNING RAMPANT

Once again the Australian Railways Union has gone on a kamikaze rampage aimed at hurting the Government, but which inevitably will have no other effect than of alienating and eroding its customer base.

The ARU, which was to have appeared before the Arbitration Commission on Friday 1st November to discuss its dispute with the Government, absented itself without reason. Within a few hours, in a piece of "double-speak", the union said it was willing to have talks with the Government. Meanwhile ARU members picketed coach terminals when inconvenienced rail travellers sought other means of travel. [ABC Radio News 1/11/85]

Apparently seeing the railways as a job creation bureau bonanza, the ARU has repeatedly cried "wolf" over loss of jobs. The railways has, in point of fact, some 1000 *more* employees than it had a year ago! The Government repeatedly assured the ARU that no-one would be sacked, and that numbers would be reduced by natural attrition. The ARU returned that its members were being sacked.

On the one hand the ARU is on strike over "loss of jobs", but on the other hand is opposing the employment of 200 people to make up a shortfall of positions — particularly guards — caused by the Government's early retirement plan. Fitting adjectives that accurately describe the union's actions include "stubborn", "mule-ish", "intransigent", "bloody-minded", "head-in-the-sand", "unreliable", "two-faced". The union seems to be unable to pursue any consistent line. It pushes first in one direction, then in the opposite. It seems to be unable to face up to reality. It calls an increase in its membership "job losses". It won't face up to modernization. Every new installation, piece of equipment or reconditioned equipment has been black banned when first introduced. Thirty years ago saw the last steam trains, yet unions insisted on retaining firemen. (NSW recently abolished firemen on most freight trains.) Australia's fastest train is still excluded from Victoria because of outrageous union demands — unions want 16 crew for the XPT whereas 6 crew operate it in NSW.

As for the current shortage of guards, this still won't be resolved until next year. The reason? — guards "must" be trained to do shunting. How absurd! This is yet another irrelevant work practice dictated by out-of-touch unions. (Even if it were necessary for guards to learn shunting, that could be deferred in order to hasten deployment and to put an end once and for all the current shortage.)

The ARU demands more station staff. A visit to almost any station will reveal just how overmanned the railways are. Take Caulfield rail station, for instance. At 11pm on a weekday are to be found at least four platform staff, not to mention two in the ticket office and the stationmaster.

It's high time employees in our railways — and that includes management — improved their game. Then the public would be a little more sympathetic.

— R. Vowels.

PIE THROWERS OR INNOVATORS ?

In his speech at the Annual General Meeting of the PTUA on 11 September, Transport Minister Mr Roper called on us to desist from "pie-throwing" and criticism of the system, and to offer constructive suggestions.

In making this statement, Mr Roper indicates an ignorance of our record and of the records in his Ministry, of the scores of constructive suggestions we have voluntarily offered governments past and present, and the scores of them implemented since our formation in 1976. These suggestions, submissions and ideas were freely offered at our own cost and time.

To recount some of our suggestions:—

- ★ Introduction of a common ticket to cover travel by all modes: *Travelcard* introduced in 1981.
- ★ Formation of a single authority to control all modes: *MTA* formed 1 July 1983.
- ★ User representation on boards of transport authorities: *began* 1983.
- ★ On 4 June at a personal meeting with the Minister, we suggested the re-employment of recently-retired guards and drivers to overcome current shortages. The proposal was ridiculed then, yet three months later is being implemented.

PIE THROWERS OR INNOVATORS ? (Cont.)

- ★ Demands that rail managers be made to use trains and visit stations — *just being tried*.
- ★ Provide noticeboards outside stations to advise of delays and of cancellations to trains.
- ★ Provide intercommunication in trains.
- ★ Retain the clocks outside Flinders Street Station.
- ★ Replace antiquated rolling stock.

The list is endless.

If a major proportion of our suggestions had been implemented, we would have a transport system to rival the best in Europe.

Had the previous Liberal Government heeded our advice to expedite the rolling stock replacement program; to increase funds for capital works and not to close down rail lines and cut services; they might still have been in office!

Many of the programs from our policy statement *Transport for the Eighties* were adopted by the Labor party in its successful bid for office in the 1982 elections! Even the slogan *VALUE FOR MONEY* was taken from that document.

As watchdog for the users, we highlight and criticize the everyday exhibition of mind-boggling unpunctuality and inefficiency that has existed and continues to exist in the transport services in Victoria. Any user of the system can recount amazing incidents of such incompetence and inefficiency. Our actions make the public, the media, and the Minister of the day — who is afraid to use the services — aware of the low standards and of the need to improve them.

One of our greatest achievements is the creation — in all sections of the community — of an awareness of the issues on public transport. Ten or twenty years ago, public transport was a non-issue. Thanks to our positive campaign it became a major issue which decided the election result in 1982, and now is an almost daily issue in the media. Late, delayed and cancelled trains, and inefficiencies make headlines. If the system were more efficient, there would be no need for criticism from all sections of the community.

In our organization, there is a large pool of professional expertise, knowledge of and interest in public transport, that the Transport Ministry will find hard to match. In fact many top officials have often demonstrated interests hostile to public transport. The failure of the Government to consider our positive and alternative policies, has landed it and the system in strife.

— Ken McIntyre

ALEX BOYNE

It is with deep regret that we inform members of the death of founding member and long-serving Councillor, Alex Boyne.

Alex was a member of the Train Travellers' Association from the day we started in October 1976, and served on our Council from that day till 1983, when he retired from the State Public Service.

He provided yeoman service not only on the Council, but at all our public meetings, campaigns, leaflet distributions and outside activities.

With his broad Scottish accent, Alex was ever ready to tell us how trains were run in his beloved Scotland. Alex also had a keen interest in the Australian Traction Society.

— Ken McIntyre

TRANSPORT FOR THE EIGHTIES

The following is a substantial extract from the Train Travellers' Association submission to all political parties in 1982. We reproduce it here as an example of the many positive proposals that the PTUA has put forward over the years.

ACTION PROGRAMMES: 1982 - 1985

The Action Programmes of the TTA are in three parts.

These programmes are prioritized. All programmes are based on consolidation of the network; value for money.

The first priority program specifies improvements needed to make the existing network operate efficiently. Some of these are operating rather than capital items.

The second priority programme specifies those minor network improvements which will improve catchments, connectivity and efficiency.

The third part of the programme is, in the life of the next parliament, the least costly. It involves studies which should be carried out to assess the viability and priority of the listed projects. New criteria taking into account the social benefits and the long-term lower costs must be found for these studies.

The Annual cost of this programme is \$117 million to rectify the past neglect to maintain the systems. The major item in this group is an accelerated programme of red rattler replacement — 15 per year for 5 years and full automatic metropolitan signalization.

Only \$64 million per annum for new works to consolidate the network is requested.

The major priority projects for 1982-85 are:—

- Extend the Alamein Rail line to Hughesdale via East Malvern and Chadstone.
- Extend Altona line to Westona.
- Extend East Preston tram line to Mill Park.
- Extend St Kilda rail line through Elwood to Gardenvale Station and Hawthorn Road.
- Extend Hawthorn Road tram along North Road via Ormond Railway Station, Huntingdale Railway Station, Monash University and VFL Park to Ferntree Gully Railway Station.

PRIORITY 1: IMPROVED OPERATIONS — REDRESS THE BALANCE

(a) "Time is money" projects.

Studies have shown that while fares are important to public transport patronage, time relative to a car trip is twice as important.

Many of the actions taken in reducing service frequency will have *increased* rather than decreased "deficits" because of this fact.

The goal of City Planners, the State Treasury and Transport Authorities should be to make public transport trips quicker and more reliable than motor car trips.

PROPOSALS:

1. TTA demands progressive improvement to rail service frequency to achieve the following minimum standard:

Peak	5 minutes
Shoulder	10 minutes
Off-peak day	15 minutes
Off-peak night	20 minutes

TRANSPORT FOR THE EIGHTIES (Cont.)

This will reduce waiting time dramatically.

2. Improved inter-change is required between modes. The TTA demands improved inter-modal co-ordination particularly at nights and weekends so that buses don't miss trains and trams and vice versa. Then travellers need only worry about timetables at the commencement of a multi-modal trip.
3. Duplication and third track projects will facilitate express trains further reducing trip times.
4. For on-street public transport, safety zones and separate rights-of-way would ensure minimum public transport delays and quicker trips than cars.
5. Signal pre-emption for trams will further reduce delays.
6. Tram or train? Some light rail "compromises" between a tram and a train offer the fast 'train' trip plus local on-street operations near the destination. Avoidance of mode changes saves time and inconvenience.
7. With inter-modal tickets, a major effort with signs and driver education is required so people on a bus or tram are encouraged to use these as a feeder and switch to quicker trains.
8. Faster trains (higher speed vehicles, tracks and signalling) are required to reduce trip times.

Patronage increases and negotiated productivity increases in the expanding network would largely offset the costs of the "time is money" programme.

The estimated net cost is \$70 million per year.

Suburban Rail:

(b) Replace red rattlers: 75 at 15 per year (\$40 million p.a.)	\$120 M
(c) Refurbish Blue fleet to silver standard (\$11 M p.a.)	\$34 M
(d) Improve safety: Radio control for all trains by 1983	\$8 M
(e) Automatic signalling for suburban network by 1985	\$40 M
(f) Complete electrification to Werribee by 1983	\$3 M
(g) Complete Ringwood — Bayswater-Croydon duplication by 1983	\$1 M
(h) Complete Caulfield-Cheltenham third track	\$5 M

Trams

(i) Tram safety zone installation and tram separation programmes	\$5 M
(j) Traffic signal pre-emption for trams and buses	\$10 M
(k) Radio-controlled trams and buses	\$10 M
(l) 100 new trams	\$50 M
(m) Automatic doors on remaining green trams	\$2 M

Country Rail

(n) New Country Rail Carriages:	\$16 M
7 New Rail Car couples and 6 singles	\$14 M
(o) Melbourne to Serviceton C.T.C. and crossing loops	\$30 M

Buses

(p) Study private bus network — Study to improve feeder service to rail and improve cost-efficiency	\$1 M
(q) All services and facilities easily available to disabled	\$2 M

TOTAL \$351 M

TRANSPORT FOR THE EIGHTIES (Cont.)

PRIORITY 2 — CONSOLIDATED IN 1982 - 1985

Suburban Rail

(a) Extend Alamein Line to Hughesdale via East Malvern and Chadstone	\$20M
(b) Extend Altona line to Westona	\$2M
(c) Extend suburban electric service to Melton and Sunbury by 1985 (including rolling stock)	\$10M

Trams

(d) Extend North Balwyn tram (48) to Doncaster Shopping Town	5M
(e) Develop Eastern Freeway light rail to Doncaster Shopping Town	\$17M
(f) Extend East Brighton tram (64) to Fern Tree Gully Railway Station via Ormond Railway Station, Huntingdale Railway Station and VFL Park	\$55M
(g) West Maribyrnong tram (57) to East Keilor (Milleara Road)	\$12M
(h) West Coburg tram (55) to Glenroy Railway Station	\$5M
(i) East Malvern tram (3) to East Malvern Railway Station	\$1M
(j) East Preston tram (88) to Mill Park including Queens Parade extension to Nicholson Street	\$18M
(k) Camberwell tram (72) north to East Kew Junction and south to Caulfield Railway Station	\$9M
(l) East Burwood tram (75) to Springvale Road	\$7M
(m) East Coburg tram (1) to Westfield Shopping Town	\$3M
(o) Mont Albert tram (42) to Box Hill Railway Station	\$4M
(p) Flinders Street Railway Station via St Kilda Railway Station to Gardenvale Railway Station. Conversion to standard gauge/light rail and extension	\$14M
TOTAL	\$193M

PRIORITY 3 — studies of network expansion

(a) Frankston — Dandenong LR/SG	\$5M
(b) Frankston — Mornington LR/BG	
(c) Lilydale — Healesville: Electrify LR/BG	
(d) Westona — Laverton HR/BG	
(e) East Malvern — VFL Park HR/BG	
(f) Pascoe Vale — Tullamarine HR/BG	
(g) Doncaster — Box Hill LR/SG	
(h) Sandringham Railway Station — Baunauris LR/BG	
(i) Conversion of St Kilda line to light rail	
(j) General study of (public) transport poor areas.	

Legend: LR = Light rail, HR = Heavy rail, BG = Broad gauge, SG = Standard gauge

On-time Running: The Flying Scotsman which plies daily between London and Edinburgh, was 3 minutes late in travelling 75,200 km during the summer. During that period, it was late twice only, and then for a total of 3 minutes, owing to trackwork.

That would be equivalent to the Aurora being 3 mins late in nearly 3 months, or to the Overland being 3 mins late in more than 3 months. [Source: *Railway Magazine*]

DEFICITS — REAL OR IMAGINED ?

The MTA doubled its loss to \$219 million in the 1984/5 financial year. (The loss was \$92 million in 1983/4.)

The cost of operating MetRail — the metropolitan rail system — rose by 22% to \$287 million.

Revenue increased by 5% from \$159 million to \$167 million.

Borrowings have leaped during the past two years — in 1983 they were \$599 million, but at the end of June 1985 the amount borrowed had blown to a gigantic \$1,031 million. The money was raised to pay for capital works — new trams and trains, track and overhead rehabilitation, completion of Flagstaff station in the underground loop, station rebuilding and the like. Interest charges soaked up about half of the fare revenue. [Sources: *Herald* 31/10/85, *Age* 1/11/85]

The STA which is responsible for operating intercity and interurban rail and bus services as well as freight, lost \$161.56 million [*Age* says \$295.1 M] in the financial year to June 1985. As this loss is down from \$239.83 million in 1983/4, it reflects a considerable improvement in financial performance.

Total revenue was \$270.3 million, an increase on the previous year's operations. However, total expenditure for its passenger and freight services was \$623.7 million, an increase of \$69.3 million over the previous year.

Patronage increased by 8.3%, reflected in an uplift of \$3.3 million in revenue. Freight revenue rose by 18% to \$191.7 million.

The total accumulated debt is \$1,750 million. [Sources: *Herald* 17/10/85, *Age* 18/10/85]

The Government's action in saddling interest debts on the STA and MTA must be viewed with concern. In the first place, the cost of rehabilitating the public transport from its former run-down state — especially the railways — is a no-win situation because neither body was making a profit. It is pie-in-the-sky to expect it to pull itself up by its bootlaces.

If it is to be offset, it should be charged against previous profits, not current earnings.

Secondly, for decades, successive governments creamed off the profits of the MMTB and VicRail, without doing what any prudent management should have done — namely, to re-invest some of that profit on updating equipment.

Thirdly — and most important — roads are built with grants, never to be repaid. Public transport is a service just like schools, roads, hospitals.

For the Government to resort to an underhand way to cripple the public transport system — by first loading it with interest debts, and then starving it of day-to-day operating expenses — is reprehensible.

— R. Vowels

GRANDIOSE SCHEMES BANKRUPT TRANSPORT BUDGET

● Mr Roper announced a \$23½ million replacement for the St Kilda and Port Melbourne lines. [*Age* 21/11]. He says that the new scheme will save \$1 million a year in MTA operating costs. Will it? What rubbish!

If we put that \$23½ million in the bank at the current rate of 19½%, we would get \$4½ million a year in interest!

So the Government (that is, the taxpayers) would actually be \$3½ million a year better off by investing the \$23½ million than in building Mr Roper's scheme.

The proposed scheme is a total waste of taxpayers' money. Not only will it result in a worse service (doubling travel times), it would then duplicate an existing superior tram

GRANDIOSE SCHEMES (Cont.)

service, which the Government would then tell us should be cut out because duplication is wasteful.

Without doubt, if ever there was investment that was overcapitalized, this is it — to the tune of \$23½ million.

- When the Government extended the Altona rail line, it not only extended the half-kilometre to Westona, it took the line an additional 4km through the middle of a swamp to Laverton for no apparent reason. That project required the construction of a massive causeway.

Instead of a modest outlay of \$1 million extension and platform, the total cost of the project blew out to \$9 million — and it is still only half finished!

As an interjector during Mr Roper's address to the AGM aptly put it: "it's a waste of money".

This project was a white elephant because the extension beyond Westona did not go into or near any existing residential area.

If such a sum was to be spent, it should have gone on taking the line to where the people are — either to Altona Meadows or to North Altona.

Moreover, it should have gone on building a decent bridge over Kororoit Creek. [The Government's new bridge has a speed limit of 30 kph!]

The daily patronage of the service before the extension was some 1000. The expenditure of \$9 million represents an outlay of \$9,000 per passenger, sufficient to buy each patron a new car.

- The Webb Dock rail freight line was completed in November at a cost of \$20 million. The line is to serve the docks. But it was constructed with wooden sleepers and light-gauge rail (50 kg) — thus guaranteeing high line maintenance charges for what should have been a low-maintenance heavily-utilized line. (Compare that with the Altona line extension — a low-utilization peak-time suburban branch line — which was constructed with heavier rail (60kg) and concrete sleepers.)

— R. Vowels

GOVERNMENT IN SERIOUS FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY

The Government is in a financial quagmire of gargantuan proportions — all of its own making.

Investigations by the Herald Newspaper [25/11] have revealed that the Government has had to borrow more money to meet interest payments on funds it has borrowed for its transport rehabilitation program. *It has had to borrow money to meet the day-to-day running costs of public transport.* The loans are referred to in the MTA's Annual Report prepared by Mr Lynn Strouse before he resigned. In that report, he said: **"The escalating level of financing charges is now a matter of serious concern. All capital works and several items of operating expenses including financing charges, are being financed from borrowings and leasing finance."**

"The level of these borrowings has increased from \$599 million in June 1983 to \$1031 million in June 1985, and is expected to increase by a further \$200 million in 1985-86."

This year the STA will have to pay \$43½ million on its lease commitments instead of the expected \$5½ million, according to the Auditor-General. In the years from 1985 to 1990 the lease commitments of the STA were estimated to be \$7.8, \$7.8, \$7.8, \$7.8, \$7.8, and \$249.24 million. Now the Auditor-General estimates it to be \$131.7 million in 1987, 1988, 1989 and \$393.6 million in 1990.

In one transport loan negotiated in 1984 for \$72.36 million, the principal to be

GOVERNMENT IN FINANCIAL STRIFE (Cont.)

repaid has risen to \$93½ million — a 30% jump in 17 months. The jump has been caused by devaluation of the dollar.

These massive and escalating debt charges account for the Government's urgency in attempting to reduce operating expenses of the MTA and STA. However, this avenue has serious implications for the public transport system. It must have available funds to continue operating, and not at the expense of new equipment.

The first thing the Government must do, and with even greater urgency, is to cut its capital expenditure program in areas that aren't urgent.

For example, we don't need \$23½ million expenditure on the St Kilda & Port Melbourne light rail scheme. We don't need to scrap the perfectly reliable green trams and to replace them with 100 or so articulated trams. Nor do we need the massive outpourings into superficial station renovations (for example, Flinders Street roofing project). Certainly we need these, but not just now when funds are scarce.

But wait. Why stop there? Do we need a tennis centre costing \$53 million and its associated car park another \$10 million? Or a \$110 million convention centre to flank the World Trade Centre at Spencer Street. [Herald, Age 9/12/85]

It is imperative that the Government reappraise its current spending levels in all areas (not just transport) instead of continuing to spend as if money was going out of style.

And the Government would be wise to attract local funds instead of increasing its overseas borrowings, in order to avoid the snowballing costs attributable to devaluation of the dollar. It is wishful thinking to expect the dollar to improve to any significant amount in the next five years. Perhaps it will, but I would not hold my breath on it.

— R. Vowels

MUTINY ON THE SOUTH MELBOURNE TRAM

On Friday 6 December, a South Melbourne-bound tram was ordered by passengers to proceed to the terminus after the driver decided to cut the journey short at Albert Park Beach.

The tram displayed route 11, but the destination roll was blank. The conductor assured riders that the tram was going to South Melbourne & St Kilda Beach. However, when the tram got to Albert Park Beach, passengers were told to disembark, and it was then that Patrick O'Connor told the crew that there was a contract to take the tram to its advertised destination. A shouting match ensued, but the crew relented and took the tram to the terminus.

Since that incident, the PTUA has received hundreds of calls complaining of similar experiences of trips being truncated. The incident at 10.45am on 9 December on an Essendon tram bound for the city (run No. E48) displaying destination 'City', is probably typical.

At La Trobe Street, the driver announced to the 70 passengers that they were only going to Lonsdale Street, and that they could take the tram behind. The tram following was equally full! And there were no other trams in sight.

And where was the crew in such a rush to go? Why to the depot, of course. They couldn't wait just a few more minutes to go to the city terminus.

It's about time passengers put an end to thoughtless and indiscriminate acts which inconvenience the public. Write to the MTA when this happens to you, making a note of the time, location, route number, tram number, and, if possible, the 'run number' (the small red number at the lower right-hand end of the tram's front window).

FOOTSCRAY — MOONEE PONDS TRAM, ROUTE 82

Perhaps it has been an intention to close this tram route for some time, as the destination *Footscray* does not appear on the destination blinds of Z3 type tramcars.

Generally, to replace trams with buses is a terribly negative step. Buses are of lower capacity and less comfort. They swerve and move violently. They pollute. They stagnate in traffic jams. They run on fossil fuels, the availability of which eventually must start to run low, making operations dependent on such fuel very expensive. They use more energy per passenger-kilometer than a tram.

Trams have much higher passenger capacity and are far more comfortable. They move more smoothly. They do not pollute. With segregated rights-of-way they bypass traffic jams. When fossil fuels run low there will still be electricity.

It has been shown time and time again, in cities from Los Angeles to Ballarat, that a change from tram to bus results in a loss of patronage.

In the particular case of route 82, there is even less advantage in such a replacement, for the tracks are in excellent condition and modern tramcars are available. Consider the following table relating to kilometre of track: -

	Route 82 only	Routes 57, 82 and depot workings shared	Total	%
In concrete	3.2	3.8	7.0	79
In ballast	1.6	0.3	1.9	21
Total	4.8	4.1	8.9	
Percentage	54	46		100

Seventy-nine percent of the track is set in mass concrete and is virtually maintenance-free. The other 21% is ballasted track and in its entirety is off-street with the distinct advantage of segregation from street traffic. The only track in bitumen and in need of rebuilding is a few metres on the railway bridge near Ascot Vale.

Forty-six percent of the track is shared with other services and this track cannot be abandoned.

If an advantage of substituting buses for trams on this route is the reduction in crews from 2 to 1, then perhaps the real solution is to operate one-man trams. The number of buses required at peak generation times for the many workers at the Ordnance factory etc would be more than the present number of trams, and ultimately perhaps no total crew reduction at these times would be achieved, just the use of more vehicles.

The trams have a further advantage here in that those used as additional trams to assist such peaks in the afternoon continue into the city as service cars to assist in the CBD (Central Business District) peak.

If a problem for the MTA is the operation of trams around the curves of Hopkins and Leeds Streets in Footscray to the railway station, perhaps the answer is to lead the trams directly from Droop Street into a terminus in the northern end of Nicholson Street Mall.

If a problem for the MTA is the duplication along Droop Street and Ballarat Road with their own bus service, then perhaps it is the bus route, not the tram route, which is at fault. Remember that that bus replaced a tram service, so initially there was no modal duplication.

If a problem to the MTA is patronage (and I doubt if this could really be) then perhaps the route concept is wrong. Perhaps northbound trams should go west at Raleigh Road, not east, and continue on new track past West Maribyrnong to Avondale Heights and East Keilor. This would in fact better suit the evolved people movement system of the western suburbs.

FOOTSCRAY—MOONEE PONDS TRAM (Cont.)

Footscray has always been the hub of the west. In fact, the western suburbs tend to operate in isolation from the City of Melbourne, being their own suburban spread with their own capital in Footscray. All transport in the western suburbs focuses into Footscray. From a great arc through Williamstown, Altona, Laverton, Sunshine, East Keilor to Moonee Ponds, buses lead into Footscray, not to Melbourne. No other suburb, no other centre, is so radially vital to such a large catchment.

Historically, with the original meander of the Yarra River and the then wastelands of the West Melbourne and Dynon Swamps and Dudley Flats separating Footscray from central Melbourne, the evolution of Footscray as a mini-CBD was inevitable. Footscray even had its own isolated electric tram services — three routes with unique little 4-wheel trams, radiating from Footscray Station and geographically quite independent of the rest of Melbourne's tram system. Footscray was Footscray.

When, in 1953, a tramway connection was made between West's Road, Maribyrnong (Ordnance Factory) and Gordon Street, Footscray (Cordite Factory), the hitherto isolated Footscray trams became part of the total Melbourne tram system. The larger bogie trams from "over there" were to be seen in Footscray's streets. Footscray was suddenly part of Melbourne.

It is important to understand the significance of this.

Although the three local tram routes closed in 1962, the connection to the rest of Melbourne remained. The very presence of Melbourne's trams makes Footscray feel part of Melbourne. The tracks and overhead are a constant physical connection to all else that is Melbourne. It is a vital sociological umbilical that must not be severed. Such a value cannot be priced nor entered on a statement of profit and loss, but it is of tremendous community importance.

The cessation of trams on route 82 would decrease significantly the number of trams operating in Maribyrnong and Raleigh Road. It would create (presumably) mixed mode (bus and tram) operation along these roads. I fear that these factors would then lead to the closure of tram route 57 (West Maribyrnong — City) and its substitution by buses (as already happens happens on Sundays), thus leaving no trams at all in the real western suburbs of Melbourne.

The people of the western suburbs are already transport disadvantaged. They look jealously (those who ever get to see them) at the wider streets and concentrated tramways of the eastern suburbs, at longer lengths of electrified railways. They tend to feel separated and less important. What little that they have must not be lost.

Finally, it is to be noted that concentrated transport studies of areas such as Ringwood and St Albans have taken place recently, resulting in significant re-arrangements of transport routes. Eventually all of Melbourne will be so covered. It would seem to be unfairly premature to make any decision to close Footscray's tram until such a complete study of the Footscray area takes place. (The situation reminds me of Brisbane, and of how consultants were engaged to study and report on that city's public transport system only after trams had been removed from the Victoria Bridge — the only tramway crossing of the Brisbane River.)

— Bill Kingsley
BCE, DipEd, FCIT, MIEAust.

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THE STRIKE ROSTER

A roster of strikes, bans, stopworks, and disputes

- 2 April 1985:** AFULE stages a 24-hour statewide rail strike, over the use of rail tractors for shunting. [Age 3/4/85]
- 6 April 1985:** TWU bans over poaching of bus drivers by Tramways Union affects track reconstruction in Glen Huntley Road Caulfield. [Age]. The bans also cause some private bus services to be cancelled.
- 12 June 1985:** Industrial Action [Age]
- 31 July 1985:** AFULE stopwork affects suburban train services. [Age]
- 3 August.** 21 bans in force, upset suburban rail services. The bans include train maintenance, use of Harris trains, use of sidings, investigation officers and the stabling of asbestos-ridden trains. [Age]
- 7 August 1985:** AFULE stopwork meeting affects suburban services [Age]
- 13 August 1985:** Statewide 24-hour strike by AFULE over crewing. [Age 14/8/85]
- October 1984 to present:** Dispute over crewing on the XPT has prevented that train's operation in Victoria. [Age 14/8/85]
- 4 October 1985:** ARU indefinite statewide strike commences. [Age 3/10/85]
- 1 November 1985:** ARU indefinite statewide strike commences. [Age 1/11/85]
- 7 November 1985:** Train services resume, but new bans are imposed, and an industrial guerilla campaign is commenced. [Age 8/11/85]
- 8 November 1985:** ARU industrial bans in railway workshops. Ban on delivering new tickets to stations (the tickets were required for fare increase on 10 November). [Age]
Dozens of bans are imposed throughout the state. [Age 9/11/85]
Free morning travel on trams and MTA buses, owing to a Tramways Union ban on collecting fares.
Railway catering staff attend a stopwork meeting.
At least 3 country trains are replaced with buses when a guard refuses to carry out his normal duties. At least one train departs without catering staff. Country and interstate travellers enjoy the experience of free food. [Herald 8/11/85]
- 9 November 1985:** Some country and interstate trains depart without catering facilities. [Age 11/11/85]
- 11 November 1985:** The ARU embarks on a campaign to cause maximum disruption to public transport. [Herald 8/11/85]
Bans on working overtime commence. The overtime bans will continue until 16 November for trams [Herald 17/11/85], and indefinitely for trains.
- 12 November 1985:** A stopwork meeting of 12 transport unions. [Age]
- 14 November 1985:** Industrial action by shunters and train examiners prevents 20 country trains from operating. [Age 15/11/85]
- 16 November:** There are more than 100 work bans in force by rail unions. The bans include refusal to manufacture and distribute brake blocks for trains and to work on rail overhead rehabilitation. [Age 15, 16/11/85]
- 20 November:** Ban on collecting fares on trams originating from Essendon Depot.
The ARU Secretary claims that there are 38 bans throughout the state [Age 21/11/85]
- 21 November:** The ARU causes five country trains to come into the wrong platforms at Spencer Street, causing chaos among travellers. [Herald & Age 22/11/85].
Shunters and signalmen refuse to carry out normal duties, and at least ten trains including the Southern Aurora and the Overland are replaced with buses.

THE STRIKE ROSTER (Cont.)

- 22 November:** Guards stage a 2-hour stopwork to midday. Decide to continue bans on working overtime. [Herald]
Another 2-hour stopwork for guards is announced for Monday. [Age 23/11]
- 25 November:** A record number of trains is cancelled when guards actually turn up for work. All told there are 110 train cancellations, forty of which occur in the morning peak. (The 40 morning cancellations are up from the 15 or so each day for the previous couple of weeks.) [Age 26/11/85]
- 26 November:** The rail strike ends — much to the relief of passengers — and services are expected to be back to normal by 27th. However, the respite is fragile, and the ARU is talking about more bans. [Age 27/11/85]
Time will tell as to the effect of this disastrous 26-day industrial dispute which has directly affected 300,000 train travellers each day and indirectly affected an equal number of other passengers. The costs of the strike will be measured in terms of riders permanently lost, and in loss of freight to private modes, and in terms of lost business, principally retail, by organizations indirectly affected.
- 6 December:** The underground loop closed at 8.30pm, because of electricity failures, after Electrical Trades Union members refused to repair faults. Parts of Spencer Street Station were in darkness.
Despite unions agreeing to lift bans from 26 November, many are still in force, and transport workers are still being stood down for refusing to carry out normal duties. [Age 9/12/85]
- 15 December:** An indefinite ARU shunters' strike commences. Although the strike affects the making up of country freight and passenger trains, suburban passenger services are cut by half. The suburban cuts seem to have been a knee-jerk reaction by rail management in a futile attempt to assert power over the unions. (Suburban trains do not *have* to be made up and broken up, though it is normal practice to make up 3-car sets for off-peak working. There is no reason whatever for the immediate introduction of Saturday timetables on weekdays as there are sufficient trainsets and drivers and (dare we mention them) guards for "normal" running (whatever that is).)

NEW FARES

On 10 November fares were increased throughout the metropolitan area. The following table shows some of the new fares.

	2 or 3-hour travel		All day	
	Adult	Conc'n	Adult	Conc'n
Inner Neighbourhood	1.10	55	2.20	1.10
Inner plus one	1.90	95	3.75	•
Neighbourhood + Inner	1.90	95	3.75	•
Neighbourhood plus one	1.70	85	3.40	•
Anywhere	2.70	1.35	4.30	1.80
Greensborough	65	35		
Broadmeadows, Ringwood, St Albans	75	40		
Box Hill	85	45		
Two sections in Inner Neighbourhood	65	30		
City Saver ticket: \$4 for 9 rides				

The Neighbourhood ticket is 2 hours in the Inner Neighbourhood and 3 hours in the Outer Neighbourhoods.

- Use an Anywhere Travelcard concession costing \$1.80.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The past year has seen a State election in which the public transport issue emerged as one of the key issues in the election. It was clearly identified as such by both the major parties in the recent Nunawading tie-breaker re-election cum by-election and will continue to be a major issue.

Last year we also heard talk of "years of previous neglect" as an excuse for continued disasters in the public transport system. I believe that this, indeed, was one genuine cause of great problems, but it is not the whole story. And by next election it will be an exceedingly pitiful excuse to make.

In 1960 the railway system was, as I remember it, well patronised and ran substantially to time. The station master was a respected person in the community. The train fleet then comprised largely of red rattlers and even "dog-box" cars. Today, three quarters of the fleet are new, either "silvers" or Comeng cars, and the total fleet will be renewed before the next election. In 1960 the signalling system was entirely manual, today we have a sophisticated computerized system. In 1960 all suburban trains had to commence or terminate their journeys at Flinders St Station. With the completion of the underground loop, trains can call into the five stations and continue onto another line without having to terminate in the city. Between 1970 and 1983 patronage dropped by 38% so passenger congestion is no problem. Nor should train congestion be a problem because the numbers of services have also been cut. Yet on January 11 this year it was *NEWS* when the trains all ran to time during the morning peak hour.

So why our present problems? There are still a few hardware problems and these are currently being tackled. But the main problems are people problems. If we want timetables to be maintained in a tight, disciplined, orderly fashion, we must have the entire organisation run in a tight, disciplined, orderly way. And that requires quite rigorous discipline from the whole staff. Self discipline as well as organisational discipline. This is the reason why the old-time station master was such a respected person in the community. "Discipline" does not, in essence, mean anything to do with punishment, although punishment can sometimes be needed in order to establish a disciplined atmosphere. With a little encouragement, people will work happily in a disciplined way, if a disciplined atmosphere is created. This is an important aspect in constructing a solution to our transport problems.

The person who is called on to deliver the solution is the new Minister of Transport, Mr Roper. His performance will have a crucial part in the re-election or otherwise of the Labor government at the next election. And when I say "performance", I do not mean his ability to give clever answers to curly questions from the parliamentary opposition. I mean his ability to obtain real improvements to the system from his management bureaucracy. During the past three years Steve Crabb has re-organised the management structure of the public transport system. There are certainly some improvements. We are glad to have a user voice at the management level, and to see an improvement in the public image of "the railways" and their employees.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (Cont.)

But can the new management really solve the present problems? It is Mr Roper's responsibility to *ensure* that they do. And no doubt in the process he *must* also bring considerable pressure to bear on several unions who have historically been considered intractable. All in all he probably has one of the toughest tasks in the government for the next four years.

There is one real problem in the present management personnel. Many of them do not seem to know that Victoria once had a very efficient and effective public transport system. The new management are looking for scape-goats. Services to cut. Economies to make. So we have new Lonie-style documents under the title of "corporate plans" for some of the authorities. Which really amount to switching the passengers to buses. Never mind that buses take longer. Or are less safe. They seem cheaper because they do not pay for the road damage they cause. Nor the real costs attributable to accidents and injuries. (S. I. O. losses of \$1.5M/day.)

In fact we all, collectively, pay far more in taxes than we ought because private transport and road transport, which are really so expensive, actually seem much cheaper than public and rail transport. It is essential that well-paid transport bureaucrats take a community-wide view and not just an authority view.

Our public transport should not be standing still. It should be progressing. There are some lines where peak hour trains are not just "full", not even "full and standing", but "full, standing and packed". On those lines we need *more services*. There are some urgent needs for new services. The Doncaster light rail, the North Rd light rail, the East Burwood extension. The Alamein train should connect to East Malvern, and the Waverley Rd tram to East Malvern, Chadstone and Oakleigh. And our interstate trains should be upgraded to high speed.

Our Association was formed in April, 1976 as the Train Travellers Association. More recently we changed our name to the Public Transport Users Association, and I am pleased to report that on 29 August 1985 we became the Public Transport Users Association Incorporated. It is nine years since the Train Travellers Association was formed. In that time we have made public transport recognised as a major issue for government, demanding competence, ingenuity and even genius in both ministers and managers. The patronage and the image of public transport have both started to improve. However, continued improvement will not occur without a great deal of further effort. We must not slacken off now. Our Association needs members, money and minds. Particularly members and minds. Will you contribute whatever you have?

Dr Doug Sherman.

THE RAILWAY JOKE – LET'S ALL LAUGH

We have compiled details of a number of incidents, mostly appearing in the Herald, relating to train travel. It will give readers a better appreciation of the problems. We trust that the Minister will take action to rectify them.

Hurstbridge Line

"You could not blame passengers for feeling somewhat neglected on the last train to Hurstbridge on Monday [21/10/85] night.

"It left Clifton Hill [at] on the morning of the 22nd, but unfortunately nobody told the signalmen at Heidelberg and Macleod.

"They had gone home by the time the train arrived, causing delays of 49 minutes and 39 minutes respectively while substitutions were found.

"While the train waited at Macleod, the overhead power was turned off.

"Passengers finally arrived at Hurstbridge at 3.05 a.m., just in time to shower, have breakfast and return to work." [Herald 23/10/85]

Minus 5 for nous, foolishness, and irresponsibility.

The signalmen would have known that the train hadn't passed through; they could easily have verified that the train had started from the city. Their action was dereliction of duty and was irresponsible.

The driver deserves a lemon award for not verifying that the line was clear and taking the train on.

Caulfield

The 11.33 p.m. train to Flinders Street from Caulfield was to depart from platform 2 instead of advertised platform 1.

Just as the train was pulling in, a staff member on platform 2 realized that passengers were still standing on platform 1. He rushed to the mike to make a hasty announcement over the loudspeaker system, advising riders of the change. But then he immediately despatched the train, leaving the scurrying passengers still on platform 1 and in the subway.

(Clearly there were too many staff on platform 1. The three of them were too busy having a yarn amongst themselves to notice that passengers had followed instructions on station noticeboards and assembled on platform 1.)

September 2:

17 trains were cancelled because of guard shortages, and passengers were up to an hour late for work. [Herald]

Tuesday September 3:

19 cancelled trains in the morning peak, 16 of them because of a lack of guards. [Herald]

Sunday 1st September:

The 6.55 p.m. to Warrnambool was loaded with food and drink — but the STA forgot to roster staff to serve it. [Herald]

September 9:

Consider the plight of residents of Yea: Parcels used to travel to Seymour, where they would be picked up by residents. Now parcels are sent to Benalla. Residents have to travel further to pick them up than if the parcels were left in Melbourne. [Herald]

September 20:

Werribee residents suffered 5 morning cancelled trains (30 guards short). [Herald]

26 September:

80 Ruthven primary School students waited at Flinders Street station for a show train which was 5 minutes late. Before they all had a chance to get on board, the train pulled out, leaving a dozen pupils behind. [Herald]

THE RAILWAY JOKE (Cont.)

October 2:

The 5.25 pm to Seymour pulled out *early* from Spencer Street. At North Melbourne, it failed to stop to pick up. At Broadmeadows, **all passengers were unloaded**, and the train put off the main line to make way for a suburban train carrying the three passengers from North Melbourne. The Seymour train then returned to Broadmeadows station and picked up all passengers and departed — 30 minutes late. [Herald]

Why on earth passengers were unloaded is beyond all comprehension.

25 October:

A goods train was halted for 1½ hours near Armadale station on the Caulfield line because its load would not fit under a bridge. It caused delays to peak-hour services. The cause? — a road crane being carried on a wagon. You would think that the railways would know how high its bridges were! [Herald]

OPEN LETTER TO MR ROPER

21 November 1985

Sir,

I have finally had enough. I have been very understanding, but enough is enough.

I have been a train traveller (on the Hurstbridge line) since I began to work in the city over three years ago. During that time I have put up with trains which:

- ★ **consistently run late;**
- ★ **are cancelled without notice;**
- ★ **are crowded, stuffy, dirty and poorly designed to cope with the inevitable overcrowding.**

In the last three years fares have gone up several times, but service has shown a steady decline. I know from your public statements that you have a lot to put up with, such as:

- ▶ inefficient management (hundreds of them);
- ▶ obsolete signalling equipment (most of it seems to be on my line);
- ▶ militant unionists (who nevertheless manage to stay with Met Rail long enough to get long service awards);

and so on but none of this is much consolation to myself and the thousands of train travellers who are at the receiving end of the kind of service and treatment which will eventually kill any support for public transport.

I don't know what you can do, but I have used the last 45 minutes (sitting in Westgarth Station waiting for yet another defective signal to be fixed) to come up with a few ideas.

Why not exhort all your Cabinet and Government colleagues to travel by train. No Minister including yourself would want to endure this situation in their Ministry.

Continue to keep all your managers out where the customers are (as in the PACE scheme). Incidentally, despite the so-called visibility of rail management during this program, no train travellers I am acquainted with or myself saw any of these worthy individuals during that time.

Start developing the service notion in your staff. The major objective of any rail authority should be to provide a comfortable, punctual and reliable service to its customers. If airlines, bus services, taxi companies, freight companies and road haulage companies can do it, the railways should be able to. If you cannot, you should not be in the business.

I wish I could personally do more to help.

I will be arriving at work more than an hour late so my time today will be limited.

I have reached the point, as I imagine many train travellers have, where anger and frustration is the only response left.

I am considering the following:

- giving up train travel entirely (a costly but much less frustrating alternative);
- asking for a refund on every delayed or cancelled trip (in the last two weeks about 50%);
- burning my weekly ticket in front of a railway policeman with the intention of provoking an

(Continued on page 57)

SECRETARY'S REPORT: 1984/85

The eighth annual meeting of the Train Travellers' Association — as our organization was then known — was held on 18 July 1984 in the Victoria Hotel, Melbourne.

The guest speaker was the Hon. Jeff Kennett, Leader of the Opposition.

Council:

During the year Council Member Doreen Parker resigned owing to work commitments and Margaret Pullar was co-opted.

Name Change:

At the AGM, the name of the Association was changed to *Public Transport Users' Association* (PTUA).

A new logo was adopted.

The Association was registered as an incorporated body in August 1985.

Activities:

During the year our activities centered on the continuous decline in performance and the inefficiencies in the system: the daily late running and cancellations of trains; the lack of security; the disasters that followed the introduction of new time tables in April; the failure to cater for the travel needs on the free travel day and new year's eve party; the continuing industrial strife and union bans; the Fairway scheme; and the battle to overturn the Government proposals for the light rail system on the St Kilda and Port Melbourne lines.

In the year under review, I had the privilege to represent users on the MTA board. While I am just one voice on the board, I have fought for the interests of users in the decision-making process of the Authority.

Nine of our members have been nominated to represent users on regional and Neighbourhood Boards of the MTA. They are:—

- Ivan Powell — Inner Northern
- Ray Walford — Inner South-Eastern
- Doreen Parker — Inner Western
- David Bowd — Greenborough
- Rod Bryant — Moorabbin
- Daina Ozolins — Dandenong
- Rob Lowe — Ringwood
- Charles Vella — St Albans
- Ray Scott — Frankston

Commuters who have matters of interest or concern in their Neighbourhood, are requested to contact their representative. [See list on page 2 — ed.]

Thanks are due to our nominees on these boards. They have performed well, and expressions of interest are called for from members wishing to serve on these boards.

Ticket Club

We commenced our participation in the scheme of obtaining half-yearly and yearly suburban tickets for members at concessional rates. Members are requested to avail themselves of this facility.

Newsletter

Our Newsletter continues to receive acclaim for its high standard of news articles and its presentation. The entire credit is due to the untiring effort and work spent on this task by our editor Robin Vowels.

Members are requested to contribute articles and material and to assist in the physical preparation of the magazine.

Council Meetings:

Council Meetings were held on the first Wednesday of each month (except January) in the Assembly Hall at 5.30 pm.

Members are invited to attend these meetings.

Acknowledgements

In any voluntary organization, the task of running the show always falls on a few dedicated members. In the past year we have had the assistance of scores of volunteers; it would be remiss not to single out a few for special mention.

SECRETARY'S REPORT 1984/85 (Cont.)

Our special thanks go to:—

- Doug. Sherman — for the quiet and efficient manner he has carried out the duties of President and especially for handling the dual roles of President and Secretary while I was overseas this year.
- Rod Bryant — our retiring Vice-President who, despite his multifarious other duties and interests, served as the brains trust for our publicity material.
- Patrick O'Connor, whose public relations skills and tireless campaigning has helped to maintain our high public profile.
- David Bowd — who from year 1 has managed our dollars and cents and the added burden of running our ticket concession club.
- Robin Vowels — for the splendid newsletters produced and for the countless hours spent in their preparation.
- John Alexopoulos — the general who organizes the various activities involving volunteers, such as distributing leaflets, and preparation of the Newsletter.
- Ivan Powell — who has been a tower of strength in the preparation of submissions and written material.
- Doreen Parker and Margaret Pullar — our industrious Minutes Secretaries.
- Our voluntary typist Bill Devine.

Outside the PTUA, our special thanks go to:—

- ▶ Mr Marcel Gilbert — proprietor of Young & Jackson's Hotel — for the free use of his hotel premises for special meetings and press conferences.
- ▶ To all sections of the media — television, radio and press — for their coverage of our activities and campaign, and for continually highlighting the failures, inefficiencies and shortcomings in the transport services.

I thank all our members and supporters for their unflinching interest and financial support. I call on each member to take a more active part in the activities of the Association and to actively campaign for new members, in order to strengthen our voice in our demands for a better transport system.

The Future:

We are entering the tenth year of our existence. This is some achievement for a purely voluntary organization. We are facing the worst period in terms of service and efficiency. The sick joke that passes for our rail system is forcing thousands of commuters away from the system and is severely inconveniencing those who are forced to rely on the system.

With an inefficient and hostile bureaucracy in charge of transport, further cuts and closures of services are on the cards. The disastrous plans for the light rail services on the St Kilda and Port Melbourne lines which will destroy patronage; the continuing levels of managerial inefficiency; staff indifference and union obstructions — are just some of the issues that we have to fight to change.

Continuing public apathy and indifference must be overcome by each member serving as an agent to recruit new members and create public awareness and concern for the poor services we receive each day.

We are fighting for the survival of the system which, if allowed to continue on the present levels, would result in a total loss of patronage. We need the time, effort and money from all commuters to force the Government to deliver the goods, to put the system back on the rails and to give us **value for money**.

— Ken McIntyre

Quote of the month: "... a broader survey would reveal support for whatever rationalization is consistent with an equitable resource allocation." — Mr L. A. Strouse, replying to the PTUA about plans for bus routes 601 and 602.

ARE TAXIS PUBLIC TRANSPORT ?

Until they were replaced by advertising signs, Melbourne taxis carried a sticker reading *Taxis are Public Transport*.

However, taxis are regarded by most people as the public transport of last resort.

For others, they have been a means of charging transport costs out to the public purse by including fares in taxation claims.

Taxis enjoyed a boom period from the mid-1950s to the early 60s for the following reasons:

- ★ There were higher levels of disposable income, but people were reluctant to go into debt to buy cars even with the incentives of low deposits, easily-available finance, and offset government charges.
- ★ Patronage of the public transport system was high, and the full extent of the neglect of the public transport system and the failure of successive governments to extend its coverage, hours of operation and frequency, had not yet been fully felt.
- ★ Victorian attitudes of 'Early to bed, early to rise' were changing, particularly with the influx of migrants.

The proof that taxis are not by themselves public transport was shown by a shutdown of Melbourne train's services on Sundays.

Taxi owners and drivers anticipated vastly increased earnings. Yet Sunday takings plummeted and never fully recovered until after train services were restored.

In general, the quality of Melbourne's taxi services can be equated with the earnings available to drivers.

The high standards for drivers set by companies such as Silver Top, Embassy and Civic in the 1950s and 60s could not be maintained, as pressure increased to license more cabs. Rather than properly assessing Melbourne's transport needs, the government allowed the Transport Regulation Board to convert so-called private hire cars by the hundreds into 'street cars' and also issue more plates.

The conversions, at the stroke of a pen, made multiple owners into multi-millionaires because the 'street' plates were worth three times as much as the 'private' plates.

Taxis in Sydney have always tended to be better utilized than in Melbourne, mainly because of cheaper fares, wider acceptance of multiple hiring, and better circulation and dispersal of fleets.

Despite the increased numbers of cabs that have become available for hire in Melbourne, we still suffer from the effects of a Cinderella public transport system that has not expanded to meet the changed needs of the community.

Although many of the thousands left stranded — particularly in the city and on Saturday nights — eventually took to cars, the aberrations in our transport system mean that the consumer cannot get access to a range of transport options when and where he or she needs it. This problem has been further exaggerated by the .05 legislation.

In other cities of the world, a broader spectrum of patrons are — for reasons of safety, convenience and economy — returning to public transport systems.

Until Melbourne achieves a better interlocking of feeder and 'back up' services, with acceptable line haul systems, these distortions will remain. Small scale modal interchanges are virtually non-existent in this city. It is still the train, tram, and line haul bus services that feed taxis rather than the other way around.

Multiple hiring of taxis from stations usually results in passengers paying near to full fare for the journey. One can scarcely blame the driver for this state of affairs, as multiple hiring is one of the few devices available for topping up a commission that does not equal the average wage when calculated at an hourly rate.

ARE TAXIS PUBLIC TRANSPORT ? (Cont.)

Recommendations

The MTA in conjunction with the TRB should introduce discounted taxi fares from stations of transport termini. Initially, this should be confined to holders of half-yearly and yearly tickets, and it should only apply at times when other feeder services are not operating.

The consumer would pay a reduced fare for his journey, with the balance of the fare being met by a component pre-paid in the MTA ticket.

The system could be controlled and abuses of it avoided through the use of 'cab charge' facilities.

The advantages for cab operators would be access to more consistent earnings, enabling drivers of higher calibre to be attracted to the industry.

The added security would make line haul services more acceptable to the consumer, as they are the only method of transport with the potential to meet the main stream of travelling needs.

An efficient taxi service, geared to do the trips it does best and to fill in gaps in the transport system would, in the words of the terms of reference of the Taxi Enquiry,

'encourage better utilization of vehicles'.

Conclusion

1. Taxi services are not a satisfactory substitute for an adequate public transport system.
2. Taxis should play a greater part in backing up public transport.
3. Taxi journeys in Melbourne are too long and result in cabs collecting in areas where they are not needed. They should instead be available to handle those trips they do best.
4. Upgrading of the public transport system would reduce peak demands on taxi services, yet deliver up a better spread of consumers of those services.
5. Earnings in the industry are not adequate at present to attract a higher standard of operator. This Association is of the opinion that there are sufficient numbers of taxis presently registered in Melbourne.

— Rod Bryant

[The above article was submitted to the Taxi Enquiry. The PTUA also made a submission to the Taxi Enquiry, and along similar lines.]

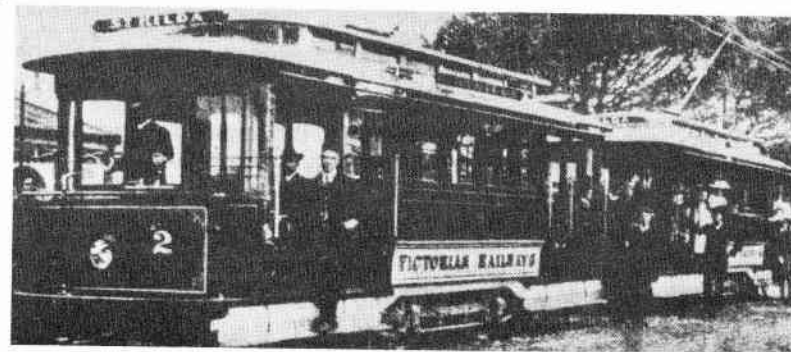


Photo reproduced from *100 Years of Melbourne's Trams* courtesy of the MTA and The Australian Tramway and Motor Omnibus Employees' Association.

THE NEWS — AND THE NEWS BEHIND THE NEWS

★ Before the Met was established, there were 4 managers of the tramways — now there are 18; there were 3 managers of the buses — now there are 14.

★ Workers at Essendon tram depot report that whenever there was a shortage of tram crews, there was a tendency for management to cancel trams on the Footscray — Moonee Ponds line. In about September, workers voted not to acquiesce to this practice.

Regrettably, as part of industrial action commencing on 11th November, Essendon crews discontinued their regular practice of working overtime. On at least one occasion that week, only 2 trams (normally 5) went out to work the route. The absence of three trams made a 45-minute hole in the services.

★ A correspondent complained in the *Age* of the Met's practice of truncating trams on route 77 (Prahran — City) in Richmond when trams are running late, instead of taking them into the city. [Age 19/10/85]

This practice could be related to tram crew shortages.

★ The previous two stories are the outcome of the MTA implementing its policy of not replacing workers who leave. The policy has been in effect since at least 25 August, and probably earlier. [Age 26/8/85]

★ At a public meeting held 14 November at Footscray Institute to protest against the MTA's proposal to close tram route 82, it was suggested that the service be extended to Avondale Heights.

★ The public meeting agreed to ask the Government to upgrade the service, and that the tram be re-instated on Saturday afternoons and Sundays.

★ A Footscray resident's suggestion was to extend operation at least as far as Essendon station along existing route 59, to make route 82 more attractive. This would, however, require re-working the junction at Moonee Ponds.

★ There seem to be no patronage figures available from the MTA for route 82, and those figures attributed to MTA sources were hotly disputed at the public meeting. The meeting agreed that a passenger survey was needed to determine what the patronage actually was.

★ Spot checks showed that route 82 tram was carrying more passengers than route 49 trams.

★ Route 82 off-peak service needs upgrading to the same frequency as routes 59 and 57. How does route 82 current 30-minute service mesh with the 20-minute service on routes 57 and 59?

★ The existing route 82 service at off-peak times has a 20-minute run and a 10-minute layover. It would be better to run the tram for 60 minutes and then take a break, as that would provide a connecting service with routes 57 and 59 trams.

★ Footscray Council could well consider the Fairway scheme at the Footscray end of the Footscray — Moonee Ponds tram line, because severe traffic congestion is delaying trams by a reported 15 minutes.

THE NEWS — AND THE NEWS BEHIND THE NEWS (Cont.)

★ Management at Essendon Depot could be improved. Crews take over trams in mid-route outside Essendon Depot and at Abbotsford Street.

Crews regularly are late. At both sites, delays range from several minutes at the depot, to 15 minutes at Abbotsford Street. The service affected most is West Maribyrnong, route 57.

★ The effects of the guerilla tactics adopted by rail unions:

- 30 to 40% reduction in suburban rail patronage (PTUA sources).

- 25% reduction in retail sales in the city during the fortnight ending 14 November. [Herald 14/11/85]

★ Featherbedding 1:

The ARU agreed to two-man crewing of freight trains in Victoria — at a saving of some \$9 million annually to the taxpayer. [ABC Radio News, November] *The Age* puts the saving at \$11.1 million.

★ Featherbedding 2:

It is costing \$443,412 extra a year to have ARU members clean Transport House, compared to what it would cost to have it cleaned by members of the Miscellaneous Workers Union. The ARU demanded that it clean the building. The cost of the ARU cleaning the building is almost double what it should be.

★ Featherbedding 3:

Ah, the age of mechanization. Fifty years ago, a team of 16 men using picks and shovels would dig up tram tracks. Now, thanks to mechanization, one man with an earth-moving machine can do the work of 16 men. But the 15 other men are still required — to look on, presumably in wonder.

In Royal Parade on 13 November, a team of 16 MTA workers were excavating a shallow trench (10cm by 20 cm) beside the tram track.

Several men walked around with shovels, while others were allowed to wield brooms. One man was sitting at the controls of a stationary earth-moving machine, while another sat at the wheel of a stationary truck. Only one man was actually working — jackhammering out the trench. In charge of this "hive of activity" was a supervisor.

★ Featherbedding 4:

It took 10 to 14 men four days to install 2 safety zones in Flemington Road recently. Each man was allotted some specific task: two men could drill post holes, one could use a hammer, two men were allowed to lift a safety rail into position, one to drive a small crane to move blocks, two men were permitted to attach and detach concrete blocks to the crane wire.

★ Featherbedding 5:

Even if patronage on interurban services had been increasing, STA management would still want to be rid of them. Currently it takes a crew of three to operate a railmotor — driver, conductor and guard. Only one person is required.

★ Featherbedding 6:

V/Line crews spend 44% of their time on the ground. [Age 26/7/85]

★ On Cup day — 5/11/85 — a listener of Michael Schildberger's ABC talkback programme suggested that if the MET could put on buses to take rail patrons to and from

THE NEWS — AND THE NEWS BEHIND THE NEWS (Cont.)

the Melbourne Cup, they could repeat that for normal working days during the rail strike.

★ And while we are on efficiency, consider:

The MTA recently relaid route 5 tram tracks in concrete in Wattletree Road between Glenferrie Road and Burke Road.

It built a temporary above-ground unballasted track next to the kerb, while it excavated, laid, and concreted each of the tracks. To enable residents to enter and leave their properties, the MTA built bridges — over their temporary track and over their works — as each side of Wattletree Road in turn was closed off.

Local shopkeepers were no doubt amused by the loss in patronage for the duration of the works.

As this section of route is near the terminus, it would have been quicker and considerably cheaper to replace the tram temporarily with a bus, instead of attempting to operate the tram over a rickety track. (If a tram had derailed, it could have been wrecked). Road traffic could have travelled in both directions, and the double cost of erecting bridges and the two temporary tracks could have been avoided.

★ At the height of the transport strike in November, Transport Minister Roper made himself inaccessible at his holiday house in NSW. And, while the ARU and the Industrial Relations Ministry were in conference at the Arbitration Commission, Mr Roper attended the Melbourne Cup. [Weekend Australian 9-10/11/85]

★ MTA fare revenue in the 1984/5 financial year was \$167 million. But \$86 million went in fake interest charges.

Having overcommitted itself on capital equipment, the Government wants to reduce operating expenditure by \$30.5 million. If this continues at the current rate, in a few years we should have the best public transport equipment in the world, but there won't be anyone to operate it. But we will still have managers!

★ Mr K. Shea, formerly Chairman and Managing Director of the RTA — the body that is a strong opponent of the tram Fairway scheme — has been appointed Chairman and Managing Director of the MTA, following the resignation of Mr Lynn Strouse. [Age 25/10/85]

★ The Government recently embarked on a \$600,000 publicity campaign to promote its 3-hour outer-Neighbourhood travel on TV, radio and newspaper. And with the Government trying to cut down on unnecessary expenditure too!

★ The National Trust classified the iron railway bridge over the Yarra that accommodates the St Kilda & Port Melbourne lines. The condition of the bridge and the Government's exaggerated repair estimate has been used as a lever in the Government's arguments to remove the St Kilda & Port Melbourne lines from Flinders Street station. Perhaps now the Government might give some thought to retaining the service.

★ Up to 20% of trams are unavailable owing to crew shortages and mechanical faults. [Age 26/8/85]

★ **Playing games:**

On 7th June, a suburban train was derailed at Broadmeadows, blocking both broad gauge lines.

Consequently it was necessary to divert some country trains via Upfield. However,

THE NEWS — AND THE NEWS BEHIND THE NEWS (Cont.)

as the afternoon drew on, the Met became uppity and declined to run any more country and intercity trains via Upfield. Thus, V/Line — which is responsible for operating country trains — was forced to use buses for part or all of some services, to some considerable inconvenience of patrons, because of delays in transferring passengers from trains to buses, and because buses couldn't keep up to the train timetable. Buses were running over 1½ hours late.

One can almost hear them down in the Met saying: "We're not going to let them [V/LINE] play on **our** tracks."

Some passengers were transferred to other trains which were eventually able to run via Essendon, after it was realized that the buses were running so late that it would still be quicker to use late trains. About 30 passengers had to stand for a rather long journey!

— Source: NewsRail, August 1985.

★ **Interstate Fares Discounted:** In October, V/LINE was offering reduced fares to interstate capitals under its CAPER scheme.

Bookings were required 7 days in advance. The fares to Brisbane, Sydney, Adelaide and Perth are \$82, \$41, \$31, and \$111 respectively.

★ In September, the MET's TV advertisement stated that 170,000 passengers used trains, trams and buses to travel to and from the city each working day.

★ **No VDUs.** On 19 October, at around 9.45 a.m., all the VDUs at Flinders Street Station were blank. When the 9.46 a.m. train to Lilydale arrived, a garbled announcement — which omitted the destination — was made. When I enquired if this was the Lilydale train, the response was that they had just made an announcement — the implication being that I wasn't listening. The scheduled departure time came and went. No announcement was made as to the reason for the delay. It was, however, due to a defective train. After leaving 6 minutes late, the train arrived at Spencer Street, where it was announced as "stopping all stations". At Flagstaff the VDU screens read 'Listen for announcement'. You guessed it — the train did not stop at East Richmond.

★ The Transport Minister made an appalling gaffe — which readers of the Age were quick to point out. The Minister claimed that a \$23½ million replacement light railway to St Kilda and Port Melbourne "... would cut peak train travel times by up to ten minutes on the St Kilda line and five minutes on the Port Melbourne line". [Age 21/11/85] But the current trip times respectively are 9 minutes and 7 minutes. Writes Ian Stanley of Highett: "... I hope he [Mr Roper] can similarly improve the Frankston line. I could then arrive at work before I leave home." [Age 22/11].

Mr Roper's scheme is bound to increase travel times by at least 10 minutes because of proposed street running.

★ The Government hopes to cut 225 staff from suburban railway stations, to eliminate the jobs of 280 shunters, and to cut 600 workers from Bendigo Railway Workshops. It also has plans to cut 111 staff from tram and bus operations by eliminating bus conductors and by axing two tram routes, 77 and 82. [Sources: Age 19,23/11, ABC Radio News 24/11]

★ According to a study conducted by Canadian Pacific (Railway), a privately-owned and operated railway between Darwin and Alice Springs could return between \$54 million and \$264 million over 50 years. The report contrasts markedly with the Federal Government's enquiry conducted by Mr David Hill (Chief Executive of NSW's SRA),

THE NEWS — AND THE NEWS BEHIND THE NEWS (Cont.)

which forecast a loss over 40 years of \$340 million. Construction would take four years and would cost \$550 million.

It is interesting to note that the study did not include additional freight that would undoubtedly be generated by Darwin as a prime entry for imports. Perhaps this was the reason that the Federal Government reneged on its promise to build the railway — political pressure from Adelaide, Melbourne and — especially — Sydney. [*Herald* 21/11/85]

★ **23 November:** In these trying times, it pays to have a sense of humour.

The driver of the 7.50am Melbourne to Kyneton train explained to passengers that the "Mighty Kyneton" was being delayed by the "Melbourne Limited" which was having troubles on the track ahead.

(The "Melbourne Limited" is a restored high-class steam train running that day express to Ballarat. The 7.50am "Mighty Kyneton" is an "all-stops" railmotor.)

★ The MTA is reconsidering its plan to close the Footscray — Moonee Ponds tram route. Along with route 77, the route was to be axed in December. [*Herald* 21/11/85].

Let us hope that the Prahran service will be reconsidered too.

The number of passengers using suburban rail services during the rail strike has fallen by 6 to 8 %. At some stations, however, the count is down by 26 %. [*Age* 23/11/85]

★ **Bus Stop at St Kilda Station:** "The bus stop at St Kilda Station was relocated to Fitzroy Street to eliminate a potentially hazardous reversing movement [that] drivers previously needed to perform in the parking area." — Mr L.A. Strouse, in reply to the PTUA's objection that the bus no longer waits outside the station. The reason is utter rubbish. The bus has turned there for years and years. The area is not a parking area, but a bus-turning area. Buses in other places have turned (and still turn) in much more restricted places than at St Kilda Station. The bus turned successfully when operated by Melbourne-Brighton Bus lines. It seems that now the Met has bought up the bus company, it can't do what has been routine for ages.

★ The ramifications of the recent rail strike are beginning to make themselves felt:

1. Australia Post has dropped V/LINE as mails carrier between Melbourne and Sydney. It is now using its own half-million dollar road fleet to haul mail to and from Sydney.

According to a V/LINE official, the loss of the \$350,000 per year business was "considerable", and must have an effect on the economics of the Southern Aurora (and Spirit) on which the mails were carried.

The Government [read "taxpayers"] have the ARU to thank for another nail in the coffin of the railways.

[Source: *Herald* 4/12/85, ABC Radio News 5/12].

2. The purchase of weeklies at Surrey Hills Station has dropped by 200 per week since the rail strike.

★ **Bicycle Storage Lockers:**— See your Station Master. Metrail advised that initial or additional bike storage lockers are supplied on a needs basis as required by Station Masters familiar with local requirements.

— Minutes of MTA Inner North Neighbourhood 4th Meeting 20 December 1984.

★ **Contradictory Statement:** Mr A. McLean, Corporate Planning Manager of MTA said: "The main reduction was 10 minute services being made 12 minute services [referring to tram and bus service reductions commenced 17/5/80].

"No significant loading problems or revenue changes were recorded. Current patronage is much reduced compared with that which existed some years ago". [ibid]

Discounts on M.T.A. Yearly and Half-Yearly Commuter Passes

Coincidental with the increase in fares, Metropolitan Transit Authority periodical tickets have been renamed Commuter Passes.

As before, P.T.U.A. is continuing to sell these tickets at a good discount to our members as shown in the table below. However, as part of its economy drive, the M.T.A. has reduced the discounts which were previously available. Nevertheless, they are still worth-while savings compared with the price you would pay if the same ticket were bought directly from the M.T.A. The savings are even greater when compared with the cost of an equivalent number of weekly Travelcards.

Term of Ticket =	Half-Yearly			Yearly		
	Normal Price	Member Discount	Nett Price	Normal Price	Member Discount	Nett Price
TRAINS+TRAMS+BUSES						
Inner Neighbourhood only	\$230	\$17	\$213	\$437	\$54	\$383
2 Adjoining Neighbourhoods	\$295	\$22	\$273	\$567	\$64	\$503
Anywhere in Metropolis	\$340	\$27	\$313	\$648	\$75	\$573

Again on account of its economy drive, M.T.A. has dropped most of the fringe benefits which previously applied to these tickets, but any Commuter Pass holder can still take the whole family (2 adults and up to 6 children under 15 years of age) on any mode of public transport anywhere in Melbourne at weekends at no extra cost.

The 6 or 12 month period begins on the first day of any month.

Applicants who don't already hold a current M.T.A. photocard will need to provide a pass-port style recent photo of themselves for identification. This photo will remain valid for the next 5 years. The photo should show a distinct facial image with the head and shoulders filling an area of 25mm wide by 31mm high (about the size of a postage stamp). Any black-and-white or colour photo will do so long as it can be trimmed to the required size by the M.T.A. For convenient handling, the overall print size (including margin) should be about 50mm by 60mm.

Should you have the misfortune to lose your Commuter Pass, M.T.A. will replace it for a fee of \$10.

Tickets no longer required may be surrendered to the M.T.A. for a refund but full short-term rates will be charged for the period the ticket was used plus a \$2 handling fee.

As well as being a worth-while saving in money terms, Commuter Passes are very convenient and save time by eliminating queuing to buy tickets daily or weekly. Should you be interested, but don't have the ready cash at the moment, why not try for a loan from a financial institution? Even with the usual credit charges, you should finish up better off than buying weekly tickets.

- David Bowd

Hon. Treasurer

December 1985

Application for Discounted M.T.A. Periodical Ticket

Half-Yearly Tickets

	Nett
Inner Neighbourhood	\$213 (after \$17 discount)
Adjoining Neighbourhoods	\$273 (after \$22 discount)
Anywhere in Metropolis	\$313 (after \$27 discount)

Yearly Tickets

	Nett
Inner Neighbourhood	\$383 (after \$54 discount)
Adjoining Neighbourhoods	\$503 (after \$64 discount)
Anywhere in Metropolis	\$573 (after \$75 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) \$
 - Donor Member \$15 (1 year) or \$25 (2 years)
 - or Regular Member \$ 6 (1 year) or \$10 (2 years)

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:.....

THE NEWS — AND THE NEWS BEHIND THE NEWS (Cont.)

★ **9 December:** A welcome addition to the VDU screens at Museum Station is the expected time of departure (in addition, of course, to the scheduled departure time). Praise be to Allah! Let us hope that it won't be too long before departure times also appear on VDUs at other stations on the loop including Flinders Street.

★ The Healesville rail line has been re-opened as far as Yarra Glen, and celebration trains ran on the weekend of 14 & 15 December. On the Saturday, a railmotor winery tour was operated and on the Sunday a steam train excursion was provided to the Healesville Sanctuary.

★ 11 November: The centenary of trams in Melbourne was commemorated with an exhibition of vintage trams in Swanston Street on Sunday 10th November. The MTA jointly published *100 Years of Melbourne's Trams* with a frontispiece by the Hon. Mr Roper. States the book: "Under the banner of progress, [trams] began to disappear from all Australian capital cities — except Melbourne. In the energy-conscious 1970s and 80s, the decision was recognized as far-sighted and, in recent years, massive investment in new rolling stock and extended services have restored pride of place in Melbourne's city and suburban streets." It is ironic then that, on the eve of the 100th anniversary, the MTA proposed to eliminate two suburban tram routes.

[Footnote: It is only within the past decade that trams were replaced with buses in the provincial cities of Ballarat and Bendigo — Ed.]

★ **XPT PUT OFF AGAIN:** The XPT which was to replace the Intercapital Daylight Express and which was to take up service in June, then August, has been put off again.

This time, it is because of outrageous union demands. The XPT normally operates with 6 staff. Unions demand a total of 16 staff for the short Melbourne to Albury run of 360km. (The ARU alone wants 15 crew.) The XPT already operates the Albury to Sydney service of 600 km, with only 6 staff.

With all that gear, do you think that there might be room for a few passengers on board as well?

★ **According to December Newsrail,** former Transport Minister Steve Crabb's early retirement scheme "...failed spectacularly, and now the railways have more employees than they had before the scheme was launched".

The tens of millions of dollars of taxpayers' funds expended in superannuating out retiring employees have gone for nought, and the railways is worse off than it was before, on two counts: being lumbered with interest charges on money borrowed for payouts, and extra salaries for the dead wood that has been employed since.

★ V/LINE's summer country timetable is out. It differs from earlier timetables in that it fails to show all services on a common route in the same table. The complete bus service from Kyabram to Echuca, for example, is to be found by examining three separate timetables, and there are six cases where no single table shows all services between two points. [Newsrail, December 1985]

★ **More Fairways:** The tram Fairway scheme was extended to Elizabeth Street in the city in mid-December. The controversial ripple bars — due to be ripped up in other streets — have been installed. The Fairway should considerably improve schedules, especially in the vicinity of the Victoria Market.

★ **Rally:** The second rally to protest against the proposed closure of tram route 82 was held on 11 December in Essendon.

★ **18 December: Users Fight Back:** The PTUA organized a small protest in front of the ARU Headquarters in Bourke Street.

★ **Featherbedding 7:** Parcel vans have driver and guard, and possibly an "unloader".

ON TOUR

On November 23rd at Spencer Street, we boarded the 7.50am Kyneton railmotor. It was a promising spring day — with not a cloud in the sky, although the weather forecast was somewhat pessimistic: cool and cloudy.

On arrival at Gisborne at 9.05am, we alighted to beautiful sunshine and a perfectly clear sky. After changing into cycling gear and making other preparations, we finally took to the road about half an hour later.

The first stage of this cross-country run is flat to the Calder Highway. There, we turned left, taking us back towards Melbourne and into the sharp descent to Gisborne shopping centre.

In the middle of the shopping centre, the Calder Highway turns left. We took a right turn which put us on the Gisborne to Bacchus Marsh road through Bullengarook and on course for our destination. (The Calder Highway portion is about 600m, and it is possible to keep off it by using a sidetrack.) We kept to footpaths until the edge of town, and then took to the open road. This portion is undulating, but gradually climbing. At a few of the steeper hills, we walked — (discover the meaning of pushbike). Everywhere around is lush green. Crows and their familiar 'arrk' abounded, but I could not place the other birdcalls. After an hour we took our first break for a refreshing drink.

Pushing on, we continued the gradual ascent. Occasionally the road swings around and we get a clear view of Mt Macedon. Finally a small hill looms up and the road sweeps to the right. Perched on the side of the hill is a substantial red brick barn-style house. This hill with its landmark house is the crest of our journey.

At 11.45 we spread our picnic lunch including whole roast chicken on grassy banks that gently sloped away from the road and overlooked a valley, the remote side of which was a forest blackened by recent bushfires. On the eastern skyline a few white clouds were forming.

This next part is the highlight, for the road to Bacchus Marsh rides atop one of many fingers of land formed by erosion of what was once a plateau. To the left, we can see the outline of Melbourne clearly. Ahead and below is Bacchus Marsh. We are freewheeling most of the way down to the outskirts.

At 2pm we reached the 26km post and the turnoff to the Lerderderg Gorge, a popular picnic spot. We decided to detour the 4km or so. The market gardens along the river flats were mostly idle. Apricot trees were in fruit. Rippling over rocks, the river enticed the children (aged 11 and 13) to have a swim in the refreshing clear pools. The water was cool but not icy.

We left about 4.15 and reached the station (a further 7km from the turnoff) at about 5.30, in time for the 5.45pm train to Melbourne, where we arrived about 6.30, still in brilliant sunshine.

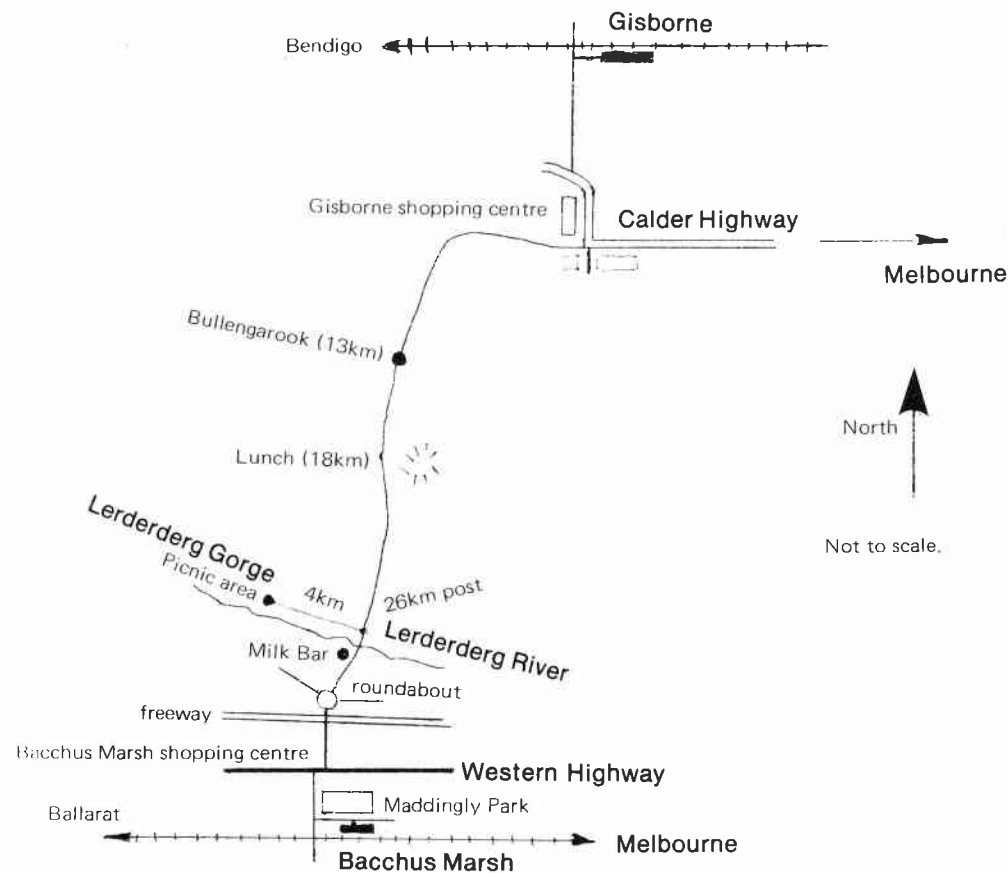
Station to station, the ride is approximately 35km, given that the signposted road distances of 32km are between the shopping centres of Gisborne and Bacchus Marsh. The excursion to the gorge is about 8km return, so the whole journey was about 43km.

The secret of success in undertaking a bicycle trip like this with children is to take it easy. There is no need to rush it. (We took the earliest train to maximize time on the road.) Whenever anyone felt fatigued, we halted for a short rest or for a drink. (Diversion such as tadpoles and lizards can add to interest.)

We have, incidentally, done this trip when the children were 9 and 11, and found it to be most enjoyable. Prior to that, I had done it only once and then with "hard" riders — my term for experienced riders who rode strongly for the entire trip. Needless to say I was utterly exhausted. Therefore I was surprised to find that on both trips with children that by riding easily, not only did we cover the same ground to much the same timescale compared to hard riding, we had plenty in reserve to take in the detour.

The children thoroughly enjoyed the trip too, and are keen on repeating it. Certainly it is invigorating and rewarding.

If you do this trip, take plenty to drink as there is no water between the main towns (although there are numerous houses en route where water could, no doubt, be obtained in an emergency.) We took 2.2 litres of fruit juices and a bottle of fresh water (or 1 litre per person). The juices were placed in the freezer overnight and were carried in a small lightweight cooler. They were still iced up when we finished them off. More liquids would be needed on a hot summer's day. There's a milk bar just south of the Lerderderg River bridge (26½ km mark) open on weekends.



MET MESS

With the introduction of new timetables earlier this year, MetRail timetabled itself into a mess.

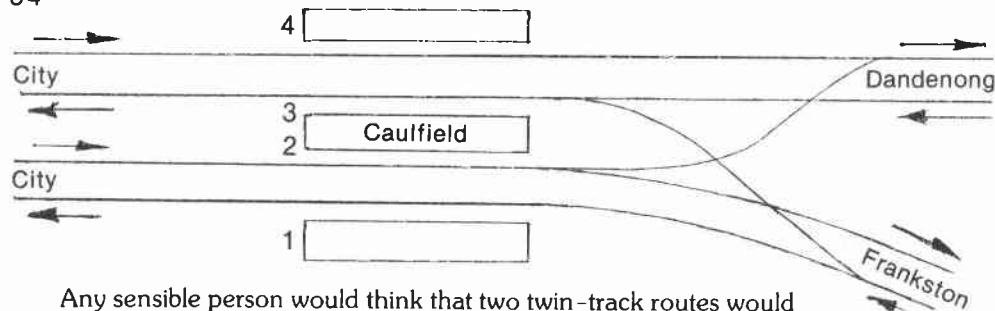
Werribee

Werribee residents must be impressed with their new service. Previously they had a twin track direct service to the city. Now that has been "upgraded" to a one-track service with a roundabout through Altona, taking at least 10 minutes longer. Their trains must now vie with high speed Geelong trains for access to the main line at Altona Junction — a level crossing — and again at Laverton Junction. No prizes for guessing which trains get priority at the junctions!

And further delays occur at Westona, where trains wait at a passing loop on the single track.

Caulfield

Background: Caulfield railway station is the junction of the Frankston & Dandenong lines. From Caulfield to the city, there are 4 tracks, neatly bisecting to double track to Dandenong & Frankston. There are crossovers between tracks at both ends of Caulfield platform.

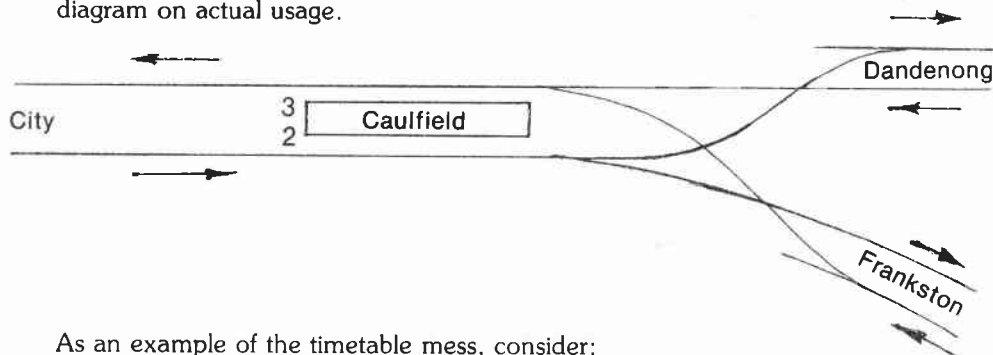


Any sensible person would think that two twin-track routes would function well and without interaction.

Enter MetRail, where the obvious isn't.

The Problem: At non-peak times, MetRail uses the two inner tracks (that is, one track from each of the pairs), an arrangement that is back to front to normal running. This creates the most complex train-switching mess imaginable, and guarantees the greatest possible number of train conflicts:

- All outbound trains must cross over all inbound train paths.
- All inbound trains must cross over all outbound train paths.
- Not only that, all Dandenong line trains must execute a "double cross", that is, cross over **two** train paths from opposite directions, as will be evident from the diagram on actual usage.



As an example of the timetable mess, consider:

On a May afternoon at Caulfield an outbound Dandenong train was held on platform 2, awaiting a city-bound Frankston line train to cross. When that train was cleared, the Dandenong-bound train was despatched. But waiting for both trains to clear were **two** city-bound Dandenong trains!

Trains at Caulfield are regularly delayed, awaiting crossovers and clearance as trains travel "wrong road" while completing an unnecessary crossover.

(Note: The above diagram does not fully illustrate the extent of the awkward crossover arrangements scheduled at Caulfield, as the crossovers on the city side of the platforms are not shown. However, trains from Frankston sometimes use platform 2 which results in wrong road use of platform 2, causing outbound trains using platform 2 to be delayed.)

How it should be done: And just how should the existing network be used? One related pair of tracks on the city side of Caulfield would at least eliminate the double crossover for Dandenong trains.

The ultimate solution, however, should involve constructing a rail overpass for either the Frankston outbound line or the Dandenong inward-bound line.

LOOK AGAIN AT PUBLIC TRANSPORT FIGURES

Even the usually well-informed Kenneth Davidson seems to have a blind spot when it comes to public Transport. The graphs he used (*The Age*, 7/11) to show a 24% increase in this year's public transport budget actually reveal that the operating subsidy has fallen by about 10% in real terms in the past two years.

The appearance of a rise comes from the increase in interest payments, but commentators would do well to analyse the nature of these payments. To avoid the borrowing ceiling imposed by the Loan Council, the states have resorted to a number of devices, uncluding performing some of their borrowing through authorities like V/Line and the Met.

The "debts" of these authorities are, therefore, just part of the state's debt, assigned to the authorities as part of a device to allow the state to borrow more than the Commonwealth wishes it to. To use the rising payments on this part of the state debt to enforce a real cut in public transport outlays is dishonest and dangerous.

No such burden is placed on the Road Construction Authority. Loans used to pay for roadworks are counted as part of the general state debt and are not used to justify budget cuts for the RCA in subsequent years. Why is public transport treated differently?

A close look at the figures reveals that the operating or working deficit is declining in real terms. This decline should be continued, but service cuts and line closures, as suggested in Thursday's editorial, are not the way. Thirty years of service cuts and closure of over eighty rail lines have only cut patronage, not the deficit, as can be seen from Kenneth Davidson's graph.

Intelligent planning and management by the Government would restore patronage and financial stability, as overseas experience has shown.

Paul Mees,
Carlton

(This letter to *The Age* was printed on 11th November 1985, and is reproduced courtesy of *The Age*.)

PUBLIC TRANSPORT DEFICIT IS INFLATED & UNREALISTIC

The annual report for the MET shows a net deficit of \$219 million. This deficit can be drastically reduced by improving efficiency and the level of services, eliminating the featherbedding in manager and staff employment, increasing staff productivity and saving the millions lost in ticketless travel, vandalism and materials wastage.

However, it must be remembered that due to several anomalies in the funding and accounting procedures for public transport, as compared to other community services such as roads, this deficit is inflated and unreal.

For a start, capital works funding is granted as a loan to be repaid with interest at market rates. This interest payment is now running at \$97 million a year. Funds for capital works and construction for roads for example are grants, not to be repaid! The current capital costs for roads is now at about \$3 billion. Imagine if taxpayers and road users had to pay interest payments on this amount.

All the costs for roads are not shown under the one head as they are for rail and thus the taxpayer has no idea of the total cost for roads to compare with the revenue. Even then the cost of third party payments for road users in a year is \$671 million, but there are no headlines or cartoons in the daily press on this one payment as there are about the \$219 million deficit for the MET.

Superannuation and retirement costs for the MET employees comes out of its own revenue, while similar payments for other road authorities and community services comes from general revenue.

The general public must be made aware of the anomalies that go to make up the deficit in the transport funds

— Ken McIntyre,
Ormond

(This letter appeared in *The Age* on 6 November 1985, and is reproduced courtesy of *The Age*.)

**WE WISH ALL OUR READERS
THE VERY BEST FOR THE NEW YEAR**

PUBLIC TRANSPORT USERS' ASSOCIATION

Statement of Cash Receipts and Payments for Financial Year 1st July 1984 - 30th June 1985

Previous Year 1983/84		Reporting Year 1984/85	
			\$ 1042.66
Previous Year 1983/84			
\$ 806.76	Bank Balance at beginning of Financial Year		
	ADD		
	Cash Receipts		
2100.00	Subscriptions - Donor Members	\$ 1900.00	
1815.00	- Regular Members	\$ 1430.00	
105.00	- Concessional Members	\$ 54.00	
910.65	Donations	\$ 1166.55	
37.50	Sale of Publications	\$ 60.65	
-	Sale of Discounted Tickets	\$ 22615.00	
-	Overpayment for Discounted Tickets	\$ 266.00	
22.34	Cheque Account Interest (credited December and June)	\$ 14.85	
\$ 4990.49		\$ 27507.03	
	LESS		
	Cash Payments		
	Purchase of discounted tickets from M.T.A.	\$ 22426.00	
1176.90	Preparing and printing Newsletter (4 issues 1984/85)	\$ 2079.93	
1919.68	Artwork and other printing (leaflets)	\$ 934.79	
674.09	Bulk postage and registration of Newsletter	\$ 503.79	
-	Final payment on typesetter	\$ 450.00	
302.50	Secretary's expenses (postage, telephone, photocopies, &c.)	\$ 309.75	
301.26	Other postage, telephone and stationery	\$ 301.17	
-	Refund for overpayment on tickets	\$ 266.00	
207.00	Hire of rooms for meetings	\$ 229.00	
63.16	Miscellaneous	\$ 104.60	
60.00	Hire of sound system (Meeting in City Square, Nov. '83)	-	
50.00	Donation to TRAINATHON competition	-	
\$ 4754.59		\$ 27605.03	
\$ 1042.66	Bank Balance at end of Financial Year		\$ 944.66

TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT: 1984/85 FINANCIAL YEAR

The 1984/85 financial year showed a fairly even balance of receipts and expenditure. Total receipts were \$27,507.03 compared with \$27,605.03 expenditure, resulting in just \$98.00 decrease in our bank balance to \$944.66 at the end of June 1985. This is a satisfactory result considering that approximately \$500 was outlaid on capital items.

On the receipts side, compared with the previous year, subscriptions from Donor Members were down by 10%, those from Regular Members were down by 21% and those from Concessional Members were down by 49%. These decreases reflect the continuing decline in financial membership from 554 in June 1984 to 382 in July 1985, a fall of approximately 31% in thirteen months.

On a brighter note, there was a 28% increase from donations, compared with the quite good previous year, as Members responded well to the call to support the PTUA in its publicity campaign to make public transport an issue before the March State election.

The big increase in turnover was due to sales of discounted MTA long-term tickets, the first of which we sold for use in January 1985.

Under this arrangement, half-yearly tickets were discounted by \$20, \$25 or \$30 depending on the Neighborhoods of availability, whilst the corresponding discounts were \$60, \$75 or \$90 on yearly tickets. These discounts allowed a small margin for PTUA, about 1%, to cover postage and printing costs associated with ticket handling. In just the latter half of the financial year, Members who bought discounted tickets saved about \$3,000 collectively.

The improved format of the PTUA Newsletter has led to some success in promoting sales through speciality book and magazine shops. These have the potential to significantly improve the economics of Newsletter publication and to attract new membership applications. Efforts are being made to widen the appeal of the Newsletter and thereby develop sales generally.

I wish to thank members for their continuing support of the PTUA by way of financial contributions, and request those whose subscriptions are now due to bring them up to date as soon as conveniently possible.

— David Bowd
Hon. Treasurer

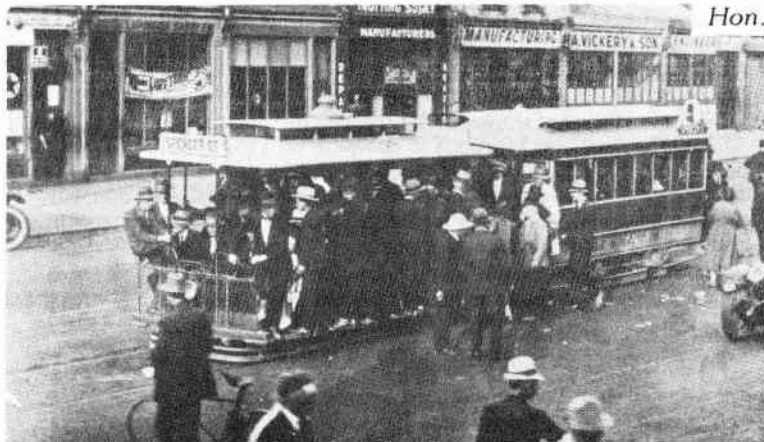


Photo reproduced from 100 Years of Melbourne's Trams courtesy of the MTA and The Australian Tramway and Motor Omnibus Employees' Association.

LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS

22 August 1985

Sir,

Congratulations to the PTUA (and the good old TTA!) and warm praise for the unceasing work done by Ken McIntyre and his helpers.

I notice from today's Age that the railway "managers" (some 120 of them . . . yikes!) are to venture out onto the trains and mingle with passengers, inviting them to voice their comments. A good idea if it is really followed through and is not simply "a nine-day wonder" with political overtones. Such managers should be on hand at peak-hour times to see the chaos first hand.

And it is about time the train crews and platform staff adopted a less belligerent attitude their customers, too. Surly mono-syllables are no way to answer enquiries from often-confused and bewildered passengers, who for far too long have accepted with resignation inefficient "service". But all too often, the staff are in the dark as much as the passengers!

The game of Railway Roulette played almost daily at Richmond, where train headboard and platform indicator are in conflict is astounding, in this so-called computerized communication age.

By all means boost morale of the staff, but please remember the morale of the passengers too. Most of them desire only to get to work (and home again!) on time and in reasonable comfort. How will the rail managers accomplish this seemingly impossible task?

— George Barber,
Blackburn

Sir,

I read the Newsletter.

Would it be possible to have a block inserted somewhere (and kept up-to-date) showing all the ongoing union bans, blackings, strikes, demarcation disputes, go slows and similar?

The union will gladly supply this because we know that all of that is related to improving railway efficiency, cost cutting, P.R., and safety. Contrary to what unkind people believe, it has nothing to do with excessive penalty rates, featherbedding, overmanning, resistance to change, refusal to believe that railways are to provide transport and not jobs etc, etc.

And surprise, surprise!! Unlike the road industry competition which must perform or there are no jobs, in the railways performance has no relation to job security. With little or nothing left, railway jobs are secure and superannuated by the taxpayer who has been driven away as well.

Funny isn't it?

— J.L.
Melbourne

P.S. Just come back from N.S.W. All freight trains on the Southern line run without guards vans and guards. This surely is a breakthrough! (in N.S.W. only)

Sir,

Recently when I was in Melbourne, I was given a copy of the July edition of your very interesting magazine. Although I am not a resident of Melbourne, I take an interest in the goings on in your city's unique public transport system.

As I would like to see more of your newsletter, would you please send me details so I can become a subscriber.

LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS

Also I think you may find there is a market for your newsletter in Sydney. Enquire at Swains, a speciality newsagent which deals in magazines and journals of this type.

— R. Melov,
Paddington, NSW

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS TO RISE IN 1986

Public transport users, who in November were becoming accustomed to the increased public transport fares, might not be surprised to learn that they will also be facing an increase in PTUA membership dues in June next year. The big difference, however, is that, although fares have increased for most users by \$1 per week, the basic increase in Association membership will be only \$1 per year.

The new rates for PTUA membership were approved by Council at its September meeting, and were fixed after deliberations on the basis of the need to maintain Association finances at a safe level in the face of rising prices for our major items of expenditure such as postage, telephone charges and printing.

Council also decided to follow the example set by some similar organizations and introduce two-year subscriptions at reduced rates. The new scale will be:

	1 Year	2 Years
Donor Member	\$15	\$25
Regular Member	\$6	\$10
Concessional Member	\$4	\$6

The increase in dues for Regular Members is approximately equivalent to the general consumer price index rise over the period since the current rate was set in April 1983. This principle also holds for Donor Members who have not been asked for increased contributions since this membership category was first introduced some five years ago.

It is hoped that many Members will take advantage of the two-year subscription rates. Thereby they will help to reduce administrative overheads in terms of the time involved in handling renewal transactions, and also provide the Association with assured funds for planned future activities. As well as the cash advantage for themselves, members might well find that biennial remittances are more convenient.

Finally, a reminder that the new rates do not apply until June next year. Members whose subscriptions are now due may renew at the old rates — as advised on their renewal notices — until the 31st May 1986. Advance payments at the old rate by currently financial Members are also welcome.

— David Bowd.

APOLOGY: We apologize to our readers — especially those who telephoned — for the lateness of this issue.

Articles came in slowly, and we missed out on assistance from our typist who offered to help during the August/September school holidays, through lack of material.

Unfortunately, a small avalanche of articles subsequently swamped the production staff and facilities and it was not possible to complete this issue before Christmas.

You might have noticed that the issue is the largest ever, and required a mammoth effort.

NSW AXES COUNTRY SERVICES

In NSW, gross overmanning throughout the country railway system was perpetrated by the ARU and other rail unions.

During the past 12 months, however, the NSW Government's ultimate and irrevocable answer to the high costs of overmanning has been to replace the entire country railway network — except for mainline services — with buses. The next two articles detail the schedule of that replacement.

Overmanning of the railways is not peculiar to NSW or Victoria or anywhere else in Australia, for that matter.

The way the Victorian ARU has been going, they could find that they too are responsible for the demise of the country train in Victoria — through the refusal to adjust to modernization and to recognize the fact that fewer staff are needed for the same tasks. During the recent Victorian rail strike, the SRA was poised to replace — permanently — country rail services with buses. [*Herald* 22/11/85]

PROPOSED COUNTRY TRAIN PLANS

The NSW Government and the State Rail Authority are currently planning major changes to country passenger train and coach services. John Hoyle outlines these proposals and briefly looks at their historical significance.

Significant changes to NSW State Rail Authority rail and coach services are to be implemented between May and December this year according to a document circulated to rail unions during late March and early April. The proposals, if carried out, will result in the replacement of the few remaining branch line passenger trains in NSW with coaches (as foreshadowed in March *Railway Digest*, page 98), together with some sections of mainline trains; the introduction of some new coach services to centres not located on the rail network; the reallocation of XPTs to well patronised services and, in the long term, the end of all mail trains, at least in their present form.

Centrepiece of these plans is the ordering of 12 additional XPT vehicles (presumably to strengthen the existing six XPT sets from five to seven trailers) at a cost of approximately \$18 million, and the expenditure of about \$4.5 million on 15 air-conditioned coaches. It is proposed to implement the alterations to country passenger services in five stages from May to December as set out below:-

STAGE 1 - 13 MAY 1985

As outlined in last month's *Railway Digest* (General News, page 98), the premier fares charged for XPT travel will be abolished in favour of the normal first and economy fares applicable to all other passenger services. In effect this move means that the XPT is to be marketed as a replacement train for older roll-

NSW AXES COUNTRY SERVICES (Cont.)

ing stock rather than the original notion of a premium level of service superimposed on the existing rail passenger network.

STAGE 2 - 27 MAY 1985

The first planned major changes to the country rail services will occur on this date when the South XPT (Nos. ST9/10) and the connecting Junee - Griffith service (Nos. SR9A/10A, currently operated by a Budd railcar) will be cancelled. As there is no replacement service, the Spirit of Progress (Nos. SL3/4) will become the sole overnight train serving all major southern line centres. Since its inception, the South XPT has been generally poorly patronised. Whether the introduction of normal first and economy fares, as mentioned above, would have enabled this service to achieve some degree of viability will now only have a fortnight to be tested in terms of passenger loadings. No indication has been given as to the future of the connecting coach schedules off the South XPT to Grenfell/Eugowra, Tumut/Batlow, and West Wyalong but, as of mid-April, it was apparent that all these services would be cancelled. However new coach services, connecting off the Riverina XPT (Nos. ST15/16), will be introduced between Cootamundra and Wagga via Tumbarumba, and Harden to Parkes via Cowra. In addition, one thrice weekly Wagga - Tocomwal coach will operate via Finley to Deniliquin - a centre currently provided with a five days a week V/Line rail/coach service to Melbourne but never previously connected to the SRA's rail or coach network. Important alterations to western NSW trains will also occur from 27 May. The Parkes - Broken Hill Silver City Comet (Nos. W45/46) will connect with the Central West XPT Nos. WT27/28) at Orange in lieu of the Western (Parkes) Mail (Nos. W49/60) at Parkes. The new Comet service will replace the present Orange - Parkes connections (Nos. W33/36, operated by the spare Comet cars) off the Central West XPT. It is understood that the new Silver City Comet schedule will result in a Broken Hill arrival time of about 00.30, with departure time from that centre of between 03.30 and 04.30. As this issue of *Railway Digest* went to press, some public opposition to this aspect of the new schedules was becoming evident. Another far-reaching change will be the rediagramming of all Dubbo based coach services to connect off the Central West XPT rather than the Western Mail (Nos. WL59/58). It is anticipated that the coaches operating to Bourke, Cobar,

NSW AXES COUNTRY SERVICES (Cont.)

Brewarrina, Lightning Ridge and Mudgee via Coonabarabran will now operate to their respective destinations during the afternoon and return to Dubbo the following morning. Journey times between Sydney and Bourke or Cobar, for example, will be cut by nearly three hours.

STAGE 3 - 1 SEPTEMBER 1985

The north and north coast line passenger services will experience many alterations from this date. The Sydney - Grafton North Coast Mail (Nos. NL11/12), the Sydney - Kempsey Mid-North Coast XPT (Nos. NT41/42) and the Werris Creek - Moree DEB set operated connections (Nos. N23A/24A) off the Northern Tablelands XPT will be cancelled. The Northern Tablelands XPT (Nos. NT23/24) will be altered to provide a seven days per week Sydney - Armidale - Sydney day return service with coach connections between Tamworth (in lieu of Werris Creek) and Moree, and from Armidale to Glen Innes/Tenterfield. Existing coach services to Lightning Ridge (from Narrabri), Boggabilla, Mungindi, Collarenebri and Inverell (all from Moree), and Tamworth - Inverell via Barraba will be retained but their schedules altered as a consequence of the new XPT timings. The SRA document states that the North Mail (Nos. NL7/8) will continue to operate "..... as long as patronage warrants, or until replaced by air-conditioned services". The North Coast Mail will be replaced by the North Coast Overnight Express (Nos. NL25/26) which will be truncated to Grafton. About an hour will be cut off the current Mail train schedule. The North Coast Daylight Express (Nos. NL25/26), NSW's last "classic" intrastate long distance express, will be replaced by an XPT service from 2 September. New coach services connecting with the "North Coast XPT", will radiate out from Grafton to Yamba via Maclean, Byron Bay via Casino, Lismore and Ballina, and Inverell via Glen Innes. The latter service is one of the "spider web" coach routes which has been alluded to by Transport Minister, Barrie Unsworth, during the last few months. In order to compensate for the truncation of the North Coast Overnight Express, the Gold Coast Motorail Express' (Nos. NL3/4) capacity will be increased by 182 seats. The timetable's of both the Brisbane Limited (Nos. NL1/2) and the Gold Coast Motorail will be altered although no details are available at this stage. However, it is understood that the Brisbane Limited's schedule will feature early departure and arrival times in both Sydney and Brisbane.

NSW AXES COUNTRY SERVICES (Cont.)

STAGE 4 - 30 SEPTEMBER 1985

It is intended to replace further country branch line services with coaches on this date. The connections off the Riverina XPT between Junee and Griffith (Nos. S15A/16A), and all weekday Moss Vale - Unanderra - Wollongong rail motor services will be superseded by coaches. This latter replacement should see the final demise of the venerable CPH rail motors. An additional service will be provided in each direction between Wollongong and Moss Vale on weekdays following the coach substitution. Because of the Unanderra - Moss Vale line's tourist potential, it is intended to retain locomotive hauled passenger trains on weekends. The Cooma Mail (Nos. SL11/12) is to be cancelled and a new coach service, presumably connecting with the Canberra Monaro Express (Nos. SR37/38), will be introduced between Canberra and Eden via Cooma, and from Canberra to Eden via Bungendore, Braidwood and Batemans Bay. Implicit in the introduction of coaches between Canberra and Cooma is the truncation of the Canberra Monaro Express from Cooma to Canberra, although this is not specifically mentioned in the SRA's document.

STAGE 5 - 2 DECEMBER 1985

This final stage in reshaping NSW's country rail services will be of special significance in that the State's last true rural branch line service (if one regards the Unanderra - Moss Vale, Joppa Junction - Canberra, Werris Creek - Moree and Casino - Murwillumbah sections as secondary main lines) between Lithgow and Mudgee will be replaced by coaches. The Dubbo - Mudgee coach service will be extended to Lithgow. The Orange - Parkes portion of the Western Mail (called the Parkes Mail in the Working Timetable) will also be abolished on 2 December. A coach connection off the Central West XPT will provide a two days per week Orange - Parkes - Tottenham service and a once-a-week Orange - Eugowra - Forbes - Parkes - Peak Hill - Narromine - Dubbo and return schedule. The Western Mail will continue to operate to Dubbo, but like its northern counterpart, its future will depend upon patronage and possible replacement by air-conditioned rolling stock.

It must be stressed that because the changes outlined will undoubtedly be subject to discussions with rail unions and associations representing rail customers, some of the proposals may not eventuate exactly as indicated. Nevertheless the country passenger service

NSW AXES COUNTRY SERVICES (Cont.)

reshaping programme, even if implemented in a modified form, will still result in some of the most far-reaching changes for the NSW country train traveller since rail passenger transport commenced 130 years ago.

Historically the proposals outlined will bring to an end the long tradition in NSW of a country rail passenger timetable based on overnight mail trains running from Sydney to major country centres with connecting branch line services. The trend away from a mail train based rail service can be traced back to the introduction of the air-conditioned daylight expresses after World War Two. Gradually these expresses have been provided with more branch line connections, often at the expense of mail trains. Of course branch line services themselves have gradually undergone a transformation with the traditional mixed train giving way to rail motors, then, in some cases, diesel trains or even air-conditioned services (e.g. Junee - Griffith). The change in direction for branch line travel from rail to rubber occurred in earnest on 22.9.75 when the first railway operated coaches were introduced to operate from Dubbo to far western centres (refer *Railway Digest*, September 1975, Item D13.199, page 12). The current plans can be viewed as a final chapter in the conversion of branch line services to coach operation.

It is also interesting to note that the general thrust of the reorganisation outlined here is remarkably similar to the proposals contained in a review of country passenger services compiled in November 1977 by Mr Roger Graham, Passenger Development Manager of the then Public Transport Commission. This review advocated improved utilisation of air-conditioned rolling stock, the introduction of coaches to replace many branch line trains and the ordering of "high-speed trains", based on the British HSTs, on some routes, especially Sydney - Canberra.

The most controversial aspect of the proposals will probably be the uncertain future of the two remaining overnight mail trains. Although the SRA, in December, denied a National Union of Railway Workers' claim that all intrastate overnight passenger trains were to be cancelled (see March *Railway Digest*, page 70), the current proposals give strength to the NUR's contentions, especially as all coach feeder services are to be taken away from the mail trains. Although the reorganisation will release the two North Coast

NSW AXES COUNTRY SERVICES (Cont.)

Daylight Express sets and at least one DEB set, the SRA's document states that the southern highlands services, the Bathurst day return train and the additional capacity on the Gold Coast Motorail Express will be the main beneficiaries of this surplus air-conditioned rolling stock. Whether the two remaining mail trains receive air-conditioned vehicles remains a matter of conjecture and may depend upon public reaction to any perceived threat to the overnight trains. Undoubtedly the SRA's plans for a reshaped country public transport network will create many new travel opportunities but of course rail enthusiasts will find their scope for rural train travel somewhat reduced. Certainly many *Railway Digest* readers will, in the next six months, be purchasing Nurail passes to sample a DEB set to Cooma or Moree, or the scenic delights of a rail journey to Mudgee. If current plans come to fruition these, and many other country trains, will soon be passing into history.

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COUNTRY TRAIN AND COACH CHANGES

The State Rail Authority recently implemented major changes to passenger train and coach services in NSW's southern and western districts. John Hoyle details these changes and briefly looks at consumer reaction to the new timetables.

Stage Two of the State Rail Authority's country passenger service alterations, affecting southern and western line schedules, was implemented on 23.6.85. The changes, previously to be introduced on 27.5.85, but delayed apparently because of consumer and trade union resistance to some aspects of the plans, were outlined in the May *Railway Digest* (Proposed Country Trains Plans, page 132). The most significant alteration to Southern Line services was the discontinuance of the South XPT (ST9 and 10). This is the first XPT service to be abolished, although the Mid-North Coast XPT's Kempsey - Sydney - Kempsey diagram was abandoned in favour of a Sydney - Kempsey - Sydney journey pattern from 3.6.84. In order to cater for Southern Highlands travellers who used the South XPT, a passenger train was introduced from 24.6.85 to depart Moss Vale at 03.43, stopping all stations to Campbelltown, and arriving at Sydney Terminal at 06.03. The return service leaves Sydney at 23.05 and arrives Moss Vale at 01.35 the following morning.

As a consequence of the South XPT's termination, a number of branch line train and coach timetable

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alterations have been made. The coach service which previously connected with the down South XPT at Harden on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (04.00 departure) and operated a round trip to Grenfell and Eugowra has been replaced by a Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays schedule connecting off the down Riverina XPT (and the up Intercapital Daylight) at Harden (16.50 departure) and operates to Parkes (20.41 arrival) via a somewhat indirect route calling at Young, Grenfell, Cowra, Canowindra, Eugowra, and Forbes. This new cross-country service returns from Parkes on the same days (21.30 departure), omits Grenfell, and reaches Harden at 01.40 to connect with the down and up Spirit of Progress services. The thrice weekly Grenfell - Cowra - Harden and six days per week Harden - Young coach schedules, with the Riverina XPT connections, remain intact but the former South XPT connecting Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays coach service from Harden to Grenfell is now effectively a positioning service, departing Harden at 08.30 and having no mainline connections.

The one-time branch line terminus town of Tumbarumba has been reunited with State Rail's passenger network with the reintroduction of a new Monday to Saturday coach (service R20S) departing Wagga Wagga at 06.05 and travelling via Tumbarumba, Batlow, Adelong, Tumut and Gundagai to reach Cootamundra and an up Riverina XPT connection at 10.45. After connecting with the down Riverina XPT, the return service (R19S) departs Cootamundra at 17.25 and reaches Wagga Wagga at 22.07. This round trip coach diagram replaces the former Monday to Saturday Cootamundra - Tumut - Batlow coach connections off both the South and Riverina XPTs, thereby halving the number of services per week. Cootamundra - Wyalong - Lake Cargelligo coach services which connect off the Riverina XPT remain unaltered except that the Wyalong - Lake Cargelligo section of the schedule is increased in each direction by one day per week (down on Fridays, up on Saturdays), and the twice weekly down and the once per week up Cootamundra - Wyalong South XPT coach connections are abolished. A Mondays only positioning coach service, with no mainline connections, now leaves Cootamundra at 05.40 to take up the 09.00 up departure from Wyalong. The twice weekly Cootamundra - Griffith - Hay coach service, with Riverina XPT connections, remains unaltered.

The Junee - Griffith line was originally to lose its

NSW AXES COUNTRY SERVICES (Cont.)

overnight service to/from Sydney with the demise of the South XPT and its Junee - Griffith rail connections but adverse local reaction to the SRA's plans has resulted in a relatively late decision to provide the Griffith line with a daily (including Sundays) connection to and from the Spirit of Progress at Junee. A train departs Junee at the less than convivial hour of 03.45, reaches Griffith at 06.40, forms on Mondays to Saturdays the 07.10 (previously 07.05) service to arrive at Junee at 10.01 with an up Riverina XPT connection. The evening Mondays to Saturdays connection off the down Riverina XPT remains unaltered, this service forming the up Spirit of Progress connection which departs Griffith at 22.00 (daily) and arrives at Junee at 00.51. The end result of these alterations is that one train, instead of the previous two (a DEB set and a Budd railcar) can now operate the four Junee - Griffith services. The Budd railcar was due to be returned to Sydney on 5.7.85 but the DEB suffered a failure resulting in the Budd still being stationed at Junee on 10.7.85. The Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays Wagga Wagga - Tocumwal coach services (Riverina XPT connection) and returning the following day remain unchanged except that the Wednesday down and Thursday up coach are diverted from Tocumwal to Deniliquin - the first SRA service to this V/Line served town. Arrival and departure times at Deniliquin are 22.10 and 05.54 respectively.

The trend away from overnight based country passenger services is confirmed with the alterations to the western NSW timetables. Nearly all Dubbo based coach services, and the Silver City Comet, now connect with the Central West XPT in lieu of the West Mail. After arrival of the down Central West XPT, coaches depart Dubbo at 14.50 for Bourke (Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays) arriving at 19.30, Cobar (Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays) arriving at 19.30, Brewarrina (on the same days as Bourke) arriving at 19.35, and Lightning Ridge (Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays) arriving at 19.45. Up coach services leave the respective centres the following mornings with the Bourke coach departing at 10.00, Brewarrina at 09.55, Cobar at 10.00 and Lightning Ridge at 09.45. The Cobar service, which operates via Warren in both directions, reaches Dubbo at 14.35, the other services all arrive at 14.40 to connect with the up Central West XPT. The Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays Dubbo - Coonabarabran - Mudgee coach continues to maintain its West Mail connections, the only other Mail train-to-coach service being a Friday only coach

NSW AXES COUNTRY SERVICES (Cont.)

departing Dubbo at 08.00 and arriving at Coonamble at 10.15, departing again at 12.25 and reaching Dubbo at 14.40 to connect with the up XPT. This service partially compensates for the reduction from nine to four coach services to Coonamble each week. In a significant timetable change, the Silver City Comet now commences its Broken Hill journey from Orange on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 13.05, after connecting with WT27 Central West XPT, and arrives at the "Hill" at 00.55 (EST) or 00.25 (CST). Broken Hill residents must now arise early to use the up "Comet" - it departs at 04.00 (EST) or 03.30 (CST) to arrive Orange at 16.38 to connect with the Central West XPT. Because the Comet set is still maintained at Parkes it operates from that town to Orange on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (10.05 Iv. Parkes, 12.25 Arr. Orange, to connect with the down XPT) and returns from Orange on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 16.55 (connection off up XPT) to arrive in Parkes at 19.15. The Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays Forbes - Tottenham coach continues to connect off WE59 West Mail, but has been altered to a Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays schedule to enable the up journey to connect with the east-bound Silver City Comet at Parkes.

Not surprisingly, some aspects of these timetable changes have created controversy in rural communities. The abolition of the South XPT only six weeks after the fare reductions, the poor utilisation of some coaches, connections in the small hours of the morning between the Spirit of Progress and the hastily reprieved Griffith overnight service, the early morning Broken Hill Silver City Comet arrival and departure times and moves to divert branch line travel away from Mail trains (interpreted by some as a prelude to their abolition) have all been sources of public debate. Prominent amongst critics of the timetable changes has been the National Union of Railwaymen. A state councillor of the NUR, Bob Schroeder, said that the SRA was creating ghost buses and trains with its changes. Interestingly, much of the public antagonism over some of the train schedule changes has been directed at the Transport Minister, Barrie Unsworth, rather than the SRA. It has been suggested that Mr Unsworth is the architect behind apparent moves towards abolishing most NSW overnight rail travel and the introduction of coaches on heavier patronised rail routes such as Lithgow - Mudgee and Werris Creek - Moree. With further major changes to country passenger services planned

NSW AXES COUNTRY SERVICES (Cont.)

for implementation in September and December, 1985 will be a notable and controversial year for State Rail's country travellers and employees.

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RECENT PTUA ACTIVITIES

Feet on seats

Passengers placing their feet on seats in trains, trams and buses could not be fined because transport authorities failed to legislate against this obnoxious practice when drawing up the transport Act 1983. Under the previous Railways Act 1958, this practice was an offence.

Following a representation from the PTUA, the MTA will pass a by-law making the practice an offence liable to a penalty of \$50.

Train Punctuality

We have repeated our invitation to Transport Minister Mr Roper to spend the peak evening period, preferably on a Monday, at Flinders Street Station with our office-bearers, to personally witness the comedy capers, inconvenience and dislocations with which rail users have to cope. No response has been received to date.

Dual Mode Study

Following representations from the Bicycle Institute of Victoria and the PTUA, the Ministry and the MTA are to study the BIV's proposal on ways and means of using bicycles as a feeder to public transport, and of improving storage and parking facilities for bicycles.

Meetings

Patrick O'Connor represented the PTUA at a series of public meetings called by the residents of Port Melbourne to discuss the redevelopment proposals and plans for a light rail service to that city. Members may recall that Government plans for the proposed light rail services were totally at odds with our proposals.

Ken McIntyre was a guest speaker at the annual conference of the Royal Australian Institute of Public Administration on 15th October at the Menzies Hotel. His theme was that users are not obtaining value for money from all the recent changes and expenditures on public transport, because of managerial and worker incompetence, inefficiency and indifference.

— Ken McIntyre

VISIT OF WORLD CHAIRMAN OF TRANSPORT 2000

Our Association had the privilege of the company of Dr Pierre Bermond, world chairman of TRANSPORT 2000 International, from 26 to 28 September.

Dr Bermond was on a world tour, visiting affiliated organizations.

On 26 September, we held a press conference at Young & Jackson's Hotel where Dr Bermond explained the background to the formation of TRANSPORT 2000 in Europe, and the extension of the concept to the USA and Canada, and how it serves as a forum for the exchange of information, ideas, tactics and studies, on matters of mutual concern and interest to member bodies.

TRANSPORT 2000, which has its headquarters in London, differs in its operations according to the country in which it operates. In countries like the UK, USA and Canada, Transport 2000 is funded by the government or railways, rail unions, environmental organizations, etc. This enables them to employ full-time officials to run their organizations. At the other end of the scale are purely voluntary bodies like ours, where officials give of their own time in the running of the association.

TRANSPORT 2000 has had success in changing hostile or inefficient transport ministers in France and Canada, and in reversing hostile government actions in the USA.

Dr Bermond stressed the need for a greater level of co-ordination and exchange of information between the affiliated member countries, which could be of interest in mounting campaigns, or in adopting tactics to achieve either specific objectives or our general objective of a better public transport system.

The PTUA entertained Dr Bermond to a dinner at the Regent Hotel on the night of 26 September.†

On 27th, courtesy of the former Chairman of the MTA, Mr L. Strouse and his staff, Dr Bermond accompanied by myself, visited METROL and Flinders Street, Flagstaff and Museum Stations and the Automatic Vehicle Monitoring centre in Gertrude Street.

A plaque was presented to Dr Bermond by the MTA as a souvenir of his visit. We thank Mr Strouse and his officials for their courtesy.

On Saturday 28th, accompanied by Patrick O'Connor, Dr Bermond had a taste of two kinds of Australian culture — the VFL Grand Final and a classical concert at the Concert Hall.

Dr Bermond was impressed by the excellent work and achievement of our purely voluntary association. He stressed the need for the formation of similar strong organizations in the other capital cities in Australia, with a future federation of these bodies. Dr Bermond was impressed with our tram system, and — like all foreign visitors — was surprised at the lack of (and poor) inter-city rail services — especially compared to European standards.

The visit served to provide us with a view of how the other affiliated organizations operate and also emphasizes the need for a greater degree of co-ordination among the members, especially in the exchange of research studies and tactics in achieving objectives in campaigns.

We thank our Council Members, especially Patrick O'Connor, for their efforts to make Dr Bermond's visit such a success.

Our thanks are extended to Mr Marcel Gilbert, Proprietor of Young & Jackson's for the use of his hotel for the press conference.

— Ken McIntyre

† Each Member paid for his own dinner — Ed.

VISIT FROM NARP

For two days in November we had the privilege of entertaining two officers from our sister organization in the USA — the National Association of Railroad Passengers — Barry Williams and Sam Stokes.

Doug. Sherman, Ken McIntyre, David Bowd and Patrick O'Connor met and discussed transport matters.

Following on the heels of the visit of World President of Transport 2000, Dr Pierre Bermond, to Melbourne and Ken McIntyre's visit to head office of Transport 2000 in London in May, this

VISIT FROM NARP (Cont.)

meeting has helped to bring in closer contact other transport consumer organizations.

In most countries, consumer groups have the same problems — the battle against governments dominated by the road lobby, for more funds or for more positive policies for public transport.

The visits from our sister organizations in other countries help with the exchange of policies, campaigns and actions used to achieve our common objective.

We were sorry that Barry's and Sam's stay was too short to show them our system. But we did enjoy the discussion, and we hope the exchanges of information will be of mutual benefit.

— Ken McIntyre



Dr Pierre Bermond addresses the media on 26 September. Left to Right: Margaret Pullar, Patrick O'Connor, Ken McIntyre and Dr Bermond. (Photo courtesy of Steve Howard.)

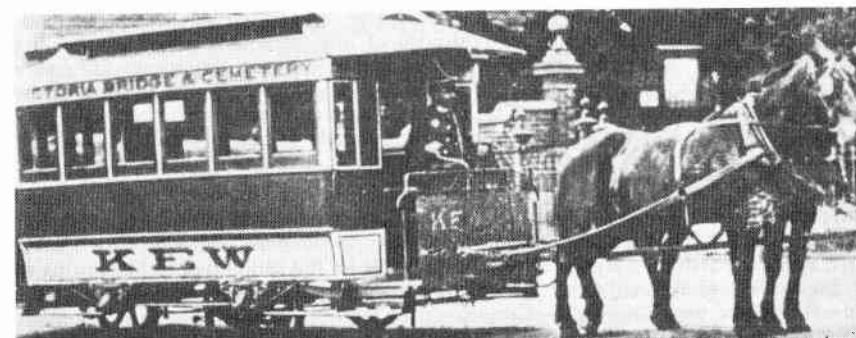


Photo reproduced from 100 Years of Melbourne's Trams courtesy of the MTA and The Australian Tramway and Motor Omnibus Employees' Association.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Summary and highlights of the address by the Hon. Mr Roper, Minister for Transport, to the Annual General Meeting of the Public Transport Users' Association at the Victoria Hotel on 11th September 1985. To maintain continuity, direct quotations are enclosed in quote marks, and lead directly into and out of paraphrases of Mr Roper's address. The usual "Mr Roper said" have therefore been omitted. Headings have been inserted by the Editor to improve readability.

Revitalization

In his address to the Annual General Meeting of the PTUA, Mr Roper spoke at length of improvements in rolling stock, including 50 new Comeng trains and 25 new A-class trams in the last three years, and W5-class trams being refurbished. He said that probably the Government's "... principal achievement — not only in terms of passenger comfort still to come, but in technological development — has been the development of the first light rail vehicles". The Government has begun examining outer suburban bus services, resulting in significant improvements in Ringwood and St Albans. In the Geelong Transit System, patronage is up more than 40%, with success also in Bendigo and Warrnambool. "All the other areas are currently being examined. Our aim is to improve services through greater efficiencies and design and operation of the service."

After a decline in patronage each year for the past ten years, V/LINE passenger services have revitalized, with a 9% increase in the last year. Passengers are "... travelling far more comfortably than they could have four years ago. Indeed the services to Swan Hill, to Mildura, to Warrnambool and to the other points that we now run to in the country are attracting people back from the roads and onto the rail and providing a good service — and financially competitive service — in doing so."

Integrated Service

"In those three years of change, I noticed that this body [TTA/PTUA] understood the thrust of the Government's policy. As a direct result of the Transport Act brought in by Steve Crabb, Melbourne now has a fully integrated public transport system of train, tram, Government and private bus, operating under the control of the MTA, which was established to meet the needs of the whole of Melbourne's travelling public. The major objective of this reorganization is to implement our Government's commitment to establish an efficient, comfortable and cost-effective urban system."

"Let me stress to you that I talk to you today as a person interested in all aspects of urban transport, not just one mode of transport. This body [PTUA] itself understands the thrust of that policy. Three years ago, you were known as the Train Travellers' Association. The Government views with a certain satisfaction the change in your organization's name to the Public Users' Association, a recognition of the importance of seeing public transport not as a system of competing modes of travel, but as an integrated system in which modes provide access rather than become the basis for competing systems."

"In the future development of services, we will be influenced by what's most important — the travelling public, our customers. If a tram service is more beneficial, then that is what will be implemented, and so on. The final decision as to the mode of transport will be based on the worth to the public, not the objective of the management of one particular travel mode. [It's] this approach to the provision of a public transport service, rather than to trying to provide a service by one particular mode that's led us to develop a number of programs designed to strengthen public transport throughout the Melbourne area. Our major infrastructure programs need to be set in that context." The overhead and track program is not observable to the travelling public, but it has meant improved running of the system. It is a fairly major commitment, which should have been done progressively many years ago.

Achievements

"The Transport Act, I suspect, is not understood by most people. ... It is a major achievement in creating a single modern corporate authority responsible for the running of all Melbourne's trains, trams and buses. We established that. We ensured that there was track duplication ... " on the Ringwood—Bayswater and Ringwood—Croydon lines, and built the Altona—Laverton line, at a cost of \$9 million, the first new line in Melbourne for 25 years. "Services were restored on the St Kilda and Port Melbourne lines. Rail services were restored to Leongatha and Stony Point."

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (Cont.)

Work has started on the Frankston express loop and the third track between Caulfield and Moorabbin. Ten million dollars have been spent to protect 70 level crossings in the last three years, and station upgrading is continuing to make surroundings nicer.

The Multi-modal Concept

"One of the major changes — and this is a change that's been built on — is the development of a multi-modal flat neighbourhood fare — a transport system and fare system across the entire metropolitan area. Now we don't suggest that all wisdom is ours. It built upon the Travelcard experiment in 1981 and the experience gained in the flat fare experiment in the southern suburbs in Moorabbin in '82, but it has resulted in a demonstrable improvement in access to get people to Melbourne's public transport system. Earlier this year, the three-hour ticket was promised for the outer neighbourhoods and is now in place. Services that aren't necessarily seen as public transport services have resulted in very major improvements for disadvantaged members of the community."

"There are now more than 50,000 people who benefit from the Maxi-Taxi service. ... One of the most successful public transport innovations that's occurred in this or any other state with people who are not able to use the public transport system as it is, being able to receive subsidised taxi accessibility. ... That's opened up a public transport option — and I call it a public transport option — that simply wasn't available especially to our elderly people only five years ago."

Late Running

"There's been particular emphasis over the last three years in developing the public appeal of the public transport system. However, it would be foolish to be complacent about its development. There are a number of particular problems that need to be addressed in relation to our public transport system. We need to continue that basic infrastructure development that's been started. We need to continue that development of modern vehicles that is well underway. But we also have to ensure that in an operational sense the system is also efficient, and the most obvious inefficiency at the moment is the level of late running of our suburban train system and the level of cancellation of train services. These are made much worse by the fact that they particularly occur at levels of peak demand. I'm certainly not pleased by the performance of our rail system in the peak periods, and I'm sure there are very few people in the system or outside the system who are. On-time performance has been falling for some time. There are reasons for that. There are also reasons why it shouldn't have occurred in the first place. However, we need to tackle those problems in a serious way. We need to ensure that where problems can be overcome — and overcome at a financial cost the community is prepared to afford — they are overcome."

"We certainly — and neither are the managers nor the unions — in any way pleased with the current situation with on-time running and cancellations."

Review

"It's for this reason that today I announced a review of Melbourne public transport arrangements. It was decided, when the Transport Act set up the various authorities, that they would all be reviewed on a regular basis. We've decided to carry out a thorough management review of the metropolitan transport arrangements." Just employing more guards is not the total solution to the current problems. "I believe there needs to be at this stage — in the third year of the MTA — a review of how far their management has been able to deliver the tasks set down in the Transport Act. ... The review will be carried out by one of Victoria's and Australia's major consulting firms. ... We would expect them to examine all matters relating to the management of the MTA, ... and the interface of the STA with the MTA. The Government will be advised by the results of the consultant's report about the future attitude to the situation of duplication of staff and effort at Metrail. The rail unions want just one railway. "The problem with that is that the split occurred to achieve an objective: to develop a more integrated tram, bus and train service. And if there were to be a change — and certainly no advice has been received or decision taken about such a change — we would have to ensure that that integration of services which is in the interests of all Melbourne commuters — and indeed the whole of Melbourne — remains."

Covenant

"We need to set realistic goals regarding the currently unacceptable level of cancellations and late ... running. I would expect the level of Melbourne train cancellations to reduce to no more than five a day on average by June 1986. For on-time running, no monthly average should fall below 90% for all weekday services, and there should be sufficient drivers and guards to meet weekday

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (Cont.)

demands with no increase in the average number of shifts. There should be no more than 15 trains out of service for maintenance at Jolimont on any weekday. This would be our target for the middle of next year, with tougher targets by June '87."

Administration

On the question of MTA organization and administration, Mr Roper had this to say: "One of the major achievements of the '83 Act was the involvement of the entire transport community in the establishment and administration of transport in the state of Victoria. This is something of which the Government is extremely pleased. Indeed the Act in '83 was the result of a lengthy process of consultation and advice, and the real strengths of the Act show the soundness of that approach. In addition to the case of the MTA, we've also seen the involvement of union and consumer group representation within ... the Board of the MTA and the ... wider community, through the establishment of Regional Neighbourhood Boards. As part of the ongoing review that I mentioned earlier, I've also asked for the role of these boards to be examined. And in the context of this, I would like to ask your Association a basic question. I strongly believe that there ought to be public transport user representation on Regional Neighbourhood Boards, and indeed I'm a strong advocate of consumer representation on the main Board of the MTA."

"But there is a question which faces me as Minister, and about which I would like the opinion of this Association. To what extent does direct representation by the Association on the administrative main Board of the MTA compromise the role of the Association as consumer watchdog? With Board representation does go a certain — and indeed a lot of — collegiate responsibility for the decisions involved, and for that matter the problems that arise, and also for the information that should be provided to a Board that's doing its job properly. I think [that] one of the questions before this meeting is to decide what is the role of the PTUA itself in the developing public transport scene. I'd appreciate your views on this matter. We certainly expect criticism — and constructive criticism — in relation to the service, and your organization also has to think of what role it fills in that area, because it's not simply a matter of saying the service is crippled or whatever, or [of saying that] the unions are the cause of the problem. It's also a matter of coming up with solutions that the rest of the community is prepared to support to improve the service. It's not simply a matter of someone else standing up in the pie-throwing contest. The PTUA has to get involved in that as well, and not simply as a pie-thrower."

Promotion

"A great job has been done in marketing the idea of public transport to the community. What we have to do is to ensure that there is reality and performance behind that idea." There has been a significant shift in public opinion of the idea of the standard and comfort of public transport over the past three years. "In looking at the MTA, you've also got to understand the size of it, and think about that. There are almost 13,000 staff, the majority of whom are represented by 19 unions. They're based at 230 locations which, apart from the communication problems it causes, is a major management task in its own right."

To be, or not to be, that is the question

"It's only four years ago that the big issue in public transport in Victoria was not on-time running, but running at all. It was the Lonie Report: it was about closing services; it was about reducing services on particular lines. But it was also the forerunner of other further attacks on the public transport system in this state." For the best part of 27 years, there was a gradual run-down of the service. Some areas are 'transport-rich', while others have no service. Contrast the running down of the system with the fact that in a capital sense it is now probably better than since early this century. "We've got to ensure that the community continues to want that, [and] is prepared to pay the money that's required for that. The first budget bid by the MTA asked for a 25% increase in consolidated fund contributions for this financial year."

"The Premier has given a clear undertaking that taxes and charges will be kept to the inflation level plus growth. That is not 25%. So we also have a major task of ensuring that in whatever we provide, we provide something that you as taxpayers are prepared to pay for — and not only you [the PTUA], but all the other taxpayers as well. And we've got to balance those two very difficult tasks."

"I would hope that your Association will continue to make a positive contribution to the debate about public transport, because there is very much a debate. You [the community] have a

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (Cont.)

motorist's organization that condemns expenditure on public transport as a total waste of taxpayers' money, and governments have to pay attention to motorists just as they have to pay attention to public transport users. You, with your name as you now have it, have a responsibility to those users, not only those going to and from work, but all those who have no other form of getting around at any time of the day or night, to ensure that that part of the debate is strongly put."

— M. Pullar



The Transport Minister, the Hon. T. Roper, fields a question from the floor at the PTUA Annual General Meeting in September. (Photo courtesy of Steve Howard.)

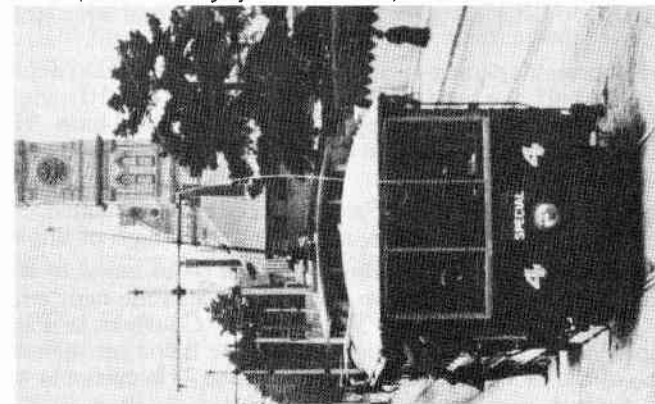


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CAULFIELD — FRANKSTON TRIPLICATION

Work on triPLICATION of a segment of this line has commenced.

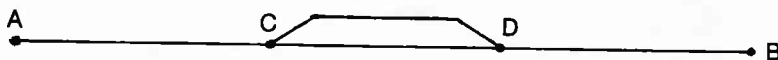
It is regrettable that MetRail chose to triplicate the section closest to Caulfield, because this segment is the one which yields the least possible benefits to the consumer.

Suppose that there are two cities A and B. Consider trains travelling from A to B on a single track which is duplicated from C to B.



Suppose that the first train, an "all stops", commences from A at 8 a.m., and the second train, an express, leaves A at 8.10 a.m. By the time they get to C, they could be as little as 2 minutes apart, as the second train catches up. If the second train continues as an express, it can gain a further, say, two minutes between C and B, thus gaining a total of $8 + 2 = 10$ minutes.

However, consider how the track might be used if the duplicate track is midway between A and B. We have the potential to pick up 18 minutes (instead of only 10 minutes in the previous example).



Again, suppose that two trains depart A: an all-stops leaves at 8 a.m., and an express departs at 8.10 a.m.

The express could be as little as 2 minutes behind the all-stops at C. The express can overtake the all-stops in the section C to D, and can travel express to B, picking up a further 8 or so minutes without danger of ramming the tail of the one now in front of it. Sample times, showing a third (earlier) train, are as follows:

Depart A	Depart C	Depart D	Arrive B
7.50	8.10	8.06	8.36
8.00	8.20	8.26	8.46
8.10	8.22	8.24	8.38

Note how the express departing at 8.10 almost catches the train departing at 7.50. In general, we can say that if the headway (time between trains) is 10 minutes, an express can gain almost double the headway by leap-frogging an all-stops train. However, when the track is duplicated at only one end, the best that can be done is to gain the headway when we run an express.

Station A could be Frankston and Station B could be Caulfield. (Exact timings would depend on the distance between A and B and the length of duplicated track.)

For any given expenditure, the maximum benefit — in terms of savings in travel times — is obtained by installing triPLICATION midway between the two "ends". (One end here is Caulfield, not Flinders Street. The fact that Caulfield to Flinders Street is quadruplicated does not change the argument because trains can already run express here, and because of the fact that Caulfield is a junction, it behaves as an "end".)

[In a previous article, I showed it was possible to run an express from Frankston to the city on existing double track.]

— Robin Vowels

LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS

Sir,

I read the Newsletter with interest and I thank the Office Bearers most sincerely for their efforts on behalf of public transport users.

I travel on train and tram four days a week to get to work, and what is said in the letters and articles bears out my experience.

The indifference of many public transport employees to passengers is marked. When going through the barriers, passengers could be travelling on tickets issued last year. Especially at Flinders Street, ticket officers are so busy with their own conversations they scarcely glance at tickets. I have even had my way through an exit blocked by ticket officers oblivious of passengers waiting to move through.

Rarely are we told the reasons for frequent cancellations, delays and lateness.

However, my chief complaint is that the train on which I travel each morning — the 7.32 to Belgrave — all through the winter has been a blue train. Previously we had blue trains once or twice a week. In the last two months we had four new trains, the rest were old blue ones. These trains are in a disgusting condition — dirty floors and windows, faulty lights, windows that are stuck; thirteen seats missing in one carriage, and years of graffiti adorning the walls.

The only people working for the railways who appear to be efficient and well-trained are those in the complaints division. They are able to make soothing noises; agree with all you say, and give a different reason each time to explain why the 7.32 to Belgrave continues to be a blue train.

Speeding on trains and trams is a definite hazard, especially around bends, and can be alarming and uncomfortable for passengers.

South Melbourne trams especially after 4pm and on Sundays appear to be in short supply. Half an hour between trams and 40 minutes on Sunday. It is not uncommon for two trams to arrive together. I have often counted two and sometimes three trams of other numbers going to other places while waiting for a South Melbourne tram

— A reader,
(Address supplied)
Albert Park

Sir,

I agree with D. Boulton that the omission of bag racks from the latest model carriages is a mistake. [July Newsletter, page 31]

My main complaint, however, is about the windows which, because of the tinting, become opaque after dark. It is thus scarcely possible to see where one is, even when the train is standing at a lighted platform. Also, since the windows cannot be opened, even in an emergency, what happens if the air-conditioning breaks down in the evening peak hour on a hot day? Admittedly I have not yet known it to break down, somewhat to my surprise. And they are comfortable to ride in.

— F. Bendeich,
Camberwell

OPEN LETTER TO MR ROPER (Continued from page 17)

arrest. (I have been a law-abiding citizen all my life, but you reach a point where anarchy seems a reasonable option.)

- promoting a campaign of civil disobedience;
- Encouraging all travellers to continue to travel, but not to pay or show tickets at the barriers until service improves.

— M. Lake,
Eltham

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF



Minister for Transport
G.P.O. Box 4910,
Melbourne Vic 3001.
Telephone 019 4660 1000

26 November 1985

Hon. T. Roper,
Minister of Transport,
G.P.O. Box 4910,
Melbourne Vic 3001.

Dear Mr Roper,

Last night (Mon 25 Nov) the 5.34 pm train, from Flinders St to Glen Waverley, again brought down the overhead power transmission line between Burnley and Heyington.

The MTA has a responsibility to provide a reliable service. This incident is a repetition of the similar incident which happened to the same timetable train on 2nd May. (Your file reference 180/206/22) In May, the cause of the incident was given as "a fatigued component in the overhead wiring". I note that at that time there was a \$12m project to replace defective sections of wiring. Naturally, after a fatigue failure of one component, one would expect that there would be an immediate inspection of the adjacent overhead gear. I am sure that this section of track is on a tight curve where stresses may be expected to be higher than elsewhere. And also, a rescheduling of the replacement work to give accelerated priority to this section of wiring. Apparently, even after 6 months, this has not been done.

I also wish to question the adequacy of the fatigue failure explanation. Fatigue causes a progressive deterioration in component strength, but the final failure often occurs because of a higher than normal load. In the case of both failures the train itself was very highly loaded, and travelling around a curve at fairly high speed. (I was reading a book last night, and so I was not attending closely, but I did not feel the speed was excessive, although it seemed fairly fast. Nor do I remember any surching or rocking of the type described by Mr Watkins.) The pantograph on last night's train was fairly narrow. (I was told that this was the case, but I don't know what sort of train was in the May incident, so I don't know what stability of pantograph tracking.) Is there any problem of trains are travelling around curves?

Finally, to give credit where credit is due, I noted, as my taxi passed Gardiner station, that someone was already fixing a "MTA Bus Stop" sign to a post opposite the station. This is at least one small sign of quick response and implementation of an emergency plan in somewhat less than thirty minutes from the occurrence of the incident.

Yours sincerely,

(Dr) Douglas Sherman

Reply Clackie
180/206/22

Your file
30-100-1955
Dr D. Sherman
25 Winifred Crescent
GLEN IRIS 3146

Dear Mr Sherman,

OVERHEAD FAILURE - 5.34 P.M. GLEN WAVERLEY TRAIN

I refer to your letter of 26 November 1985 in which you detail a number of comments concerning the Burnley-Heyington incident. I have received advice on this incident and as you point out this was the issue of other overhead difficulties on 2 May 1985.

The Metropolitan Transit Authority has advised that the design of the existing overhead was associated with this failure. Part of the Government strategy to improve train services is the upgrading of all the existing overhead wiring. A contract has been let and replacement of the overhead wiring will take several years.

In view of this incident and that this location was not scheduled in the near future for replacement, it was decided to accelerate the project by the use of Metrail labour. The design details and purchase of the various component has been given a high priority. The work will be undertaken in early 1986.

I wish to thank you for your comments and suggestions.

Yours sincerely,


TOM ROOPER
MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF (Cont.)

The Editor comments: We now have at hand important additional evidence on the segment of track between Burnley Station and the bridge. (Details of the Burnley incident on 2 May were given in the July Newsletter.)

Consider the facts:

- ★ On 2 May and 25 November, the same scheduled train (5.32 pm) from Flinders Street was cancelled.
- ★ On both days the 5.45pm was thus carrying a double load. (In fact, on the 25th November, it was carrying more than a double load because it was 13 minutes late.)
- ★ On the same curve, the packed trains brought down the overhead.

That the same circumstances should lead to the same failure is beyond the realms of coincidence. The odds of it happening twice by chance in the same place are a million to one.

There is now no question whatever as to the cause:

It is quite clear that in both cases, the cause was the train leaning over as it engaged the curve, allowing a pantograph to override the overhead. As Sherlock Holmes himself would have said: "Elementary, my dear Watson".

The Editor did not buy the fatigue explanation for the failure on 2 May (see July issue). He said: "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." Readers may recall Mr Watkin's conclusion: "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."

In Mr Roper's reply to Mr Watkins, he stated: "Six spans of overhead wiring were torn out in this failure, covering approximately 400 metres of track."

He also said: "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.**" [our emphasis] (ibid)

Subsequent to the 2 May incident, the overhead and track was visually inspected. There was no evidence of subsidence with the track under load, neither did it seem that the overhead was out of alignment, though it was noted that the distance of each overhead span seemed somewhat large, and that the overhead was riding from one side of each pantograph to the other as each train traversed the curve. It is probable that the geometry of the overhead is wrong and that the spans should be shortened.

Curiously, Mr Roper wrote: "The construction of 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." (ibid) Why, then, was this section of overhead re-instated to the old design in May 1985 instead of the new design?

Mr Roper advises (30 December) that "this location was not scheduled in the near future for replacement". Why not, we may well ask! Surely passengers have a right to expect something better. Do we have to have the overhead falling down everytime an overloaded train goes round a bend?

Cover:

Chaotic scenes developed as passengers flocked around Flinders Street Station after the Newmarket train was cancelled. Passengers had been herded from platform to platform after signalmen continued industrial action to disrupt the service. Somehow, points and signals directed the train back to Newmarket without it ever reaching Flinders Street station, resulting in the cancellation.

The onlookers are thought to be beleaguered MTA and STA managers.

Since the rail dispute began four years ago, all Swanston Street trams have been replaced with double-decker buses brought in especially from Sydney, and the sole surviving tram can be seen here operating in Flinders Street. Buses have long since replaced trams on other routes.

Newmarket is the only suburban station in the formerly extensive metropolitan rail system that has been progressively closed since 1985.

The passengers here could have a long wait, as the only guard imposed overtime bans which will prevent the train from returning to Flinders Street until next week. It is believed that passengers will be put out on agistment in the Botanic Gardens until services resume.

— Photo courtesy of The Age.

★ **13 December:** Friday 13th wasn't a great day for the Met.

At around 10am, three trams collided in Elizabeth Street at Lonsdale Street when one tram slammed into the rear of a stationary tram, pushing it into the one in front. The combined momentum of the two trams pushed the third into the intersection against a red traffic light. Ten passengers were taken to hospital with minor injuries. The driver involved was new, and is reported to have put his foot on the accelerator instead of the brake.

Trams banked up beyond Victoria Street. The MTA was slow to respond, and neither passengers nor crews of those trams had any inkling as to the cause and possible duration of the delay, nor were crews advised of corrective action.

Trams should have been diverted to Swanston Street, but were just left to bank up at Victoria Street, with crews kept in ignorance.

Later in Flemington Road at Abbotsford Street, three trams were bound for the city via North Melbourne. Inspectors ordered passengers off the second tram and into a third (owing to a defective tram, but there didn't seem to be anything wrong with it). Unfortunately for the passengers, the third tram was without a crew, and the first tram — empty and raring to go — departed empty. It didn't seem to matter to the inspectors that passengers had been cooling their heels for 21 minutes.

Still later, at 4.25pm a tram from Essendon bound for the city was being truncated at Victoria Market. The tram behind, also from Essendon, overshot the reversing area, preventing the first tram from returning to Essendon. The second tram then wouldn't reverse.

The outcome was four trams delayed a total of 20 minutes, just to save 10 minutes on a peak-period run which should have gone into the city anyway.

By the evening peak, trams were running more than half-an-hour behind schedule.

WHAT BROUGHT IT ON

The Government has budgeted \$30½ million less for operating public transport in this, the 1985/6 financial year. It is adamant that it is not going to budge from that position.

In the railways, the STA drew up plans to cut country services. In the MTA, management thought that they could get away with axing two tram lines and by reducing operating staff on trams and buses, and by de-manning the majority of stations.

Both bodies have made the fundamental blunder of attempting to reduce costs by cutting out the staff that actually operate the services.

During the past couple of months, the MET has been reducing tram crews by not replacing workers who retire or leave the service. [Age 26/8/85] This has led to services being randomly cut out without notice — an MTA version of Russian roulette. In the case of the metropolitan rail system, early retirement of guards coupled with an inefficient re-training programme, produced a twelve-month shortage of guards and the cancellation of a daily average of 40 trains.†

When the Met was formed in 1983 by the takeover of the MMTB and subsequently in 1985 amalgamation with the metropolitan rail system, the additional high-echelon management drew a salary of tens of millions of dollars, without improving the service one iota.§

The STA proposed to do away with its interurban rail services. It says that patronage has fallen. (Patronage in fact rose by 8% in the last financial year, so that the fact that it fell on these particular services is a reflection on STA competence).

Much of the interurban services have been run with buses, owing to the shortage of rolling stock and of crews, and the usual railway bungling.‡ Buses take longer, and are less comfortable than trains. It is usual to expect that when a bus replaces a train, patronage halves.††

A fall of patronage on these routes can be fairly sheeted home to management.

— R. Vowels

† From April through September, an average of 40 trains a day were cancelled. Herald 2/8, Age 12/9.

§ New rolling stock, to be sure, but either it doesn't run because of lack of staff, or it runs poorly through inefficient management, disorganized timetabling and poor timekeeping.

‡ Refer elsewhere in this issue for a report on the argument between the STA and the Met on running country trains through Upfield, and previous issues which reported the replacement of interurban services on a regular basis with buses.

†† In my submission to the enquiry into Gippsland railway services, I cited the case of the Cranbourne — Dandenong bus service. When that bus was replaced by a railmotor on a regular basis, patronage doubled.