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NEWSLETTER

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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 since the Newsletter is printed first (obviously). 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,
 Chris Pidd,
 Robin Vowels,
 Denise Young.

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OFFICE-BEARERS FOR 1984/5

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Dr Doug Sherman

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David Bowd

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Ray Walford

The Public Transport Users' Association

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

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

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

Meetings

Members are invited to attend Council and annual general meetings.

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

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

Membership

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

Newsletter

The PTUA Newsletter is published by and for members of the Public Transport Users' Association. 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.

Address all correspondence to The Secretary, PTUA, Tel.

Cover: The PTUA's mobile display attracted the attention of at least one passer-by at the Gardiners Creek Valley Association festival "on location" on 14th October.

[Photo courtesy Rod Bryant]

Dear Member,

With your support, public transport became one of the crucial issues at the last state election. Most members in electorates where rail lines were threatened with closure lost their seats.

Today we are facing the prospect of public transport proposals as absurd as any of those that sparked the massive outcry against the "Lonie" recommendations. But this time they are being implemented by stealth. You will not hear anything at all from the government until after the election. And then it seems probable that the proposals will only be announced in dribs and drabs.

The people orchestrating this are not the government. They are bureaucrats in the Ministry of Transport, bright boys who grew up in the CRB and the RCA who now have been promoted to positions of control of the whole transport system. They are "Yes Minister" boys who snow their part-time minister so he cannot investigate whether there really are alternatives to their pet schemes.

This part-time minister has shut himself off from most contact with the users and user-representatives. He fails to obtain feedback from the people who use the system, those who voted his party into office.

Our response must be to tackle each major issue as it arises - or before. When the RCA unveils its plans to close a major railway line and replace it with a freeway we must present a carefully reasoned case to explain the tremendous disruption this will cause to Melbourne. And we have to present this case to the public as well as their parliamentary representatives.

Right now we want to distribute leaflets in several critical areas to explain threats to public transport in those areas. We must persuade all the local members that they have to take a very critical view of the proposals that are about to start flowing from the Ministry. In fact, we want them to give specific undertakings that they will critically consider any proposals and demand to see (and have published) reasoned cases concerning the alternatives using public transport. Now is the time to obtain those undertakings because of the election scheduled for February or March.

As a voluntary organisation, our only source of revenue is what you, our members, contribute. The minimal membership subscription of \$5 covers our normal expenditure. To finance once off campaigns, such as this pre-election campaign, we urgently need your donations and personal assistance. I know many of you have made additional donations to help our sustained campaign for better transport. But right now, Melbourne has become the fourth worst city in the world for the effect of photo-chemical smog. If you believe in the importance of public transport, of clean air, of saving road accident lives, of a convenient city structure, there are three things you can do to help.

1. Write a letter to the newspaper or ring talk-back radio in support of public transport. This ensures that transport is seen as the critical election issue it is, and raises a voice against the vociferous, self interested, road industry lobby.

2. Be ready to help distribute leaflets. We keep a list of people who have volunteered to help in this way. You may be called on in the near future.

3. Support financially. We hope to prepare several leaflets addressing particular issues. Obviously this requires money, so will you please make a special donation towards our pre-election campaign to make politicians aware of public transport and critical of the Ministry/CRB/RCA road biased proposals.

Douglas Sherman

Dr Doug Sherman
(President)

ODE TO SLOW TRAINS

To Mr Crabb: we've taken pen,
We've said it before and we'll say it again,
The railways admin. is in a sorry plight,
It's said they can't do an on-time flight.

Why not take a train to work
Instead of limousine chauffeured?
And see for yourself the signals red
For trains coming into Flinders St. shed.

Train took I to Flinders Street late,
No other trains there in the dead of night
At 12 — a clear run in, what could be better,
But no, check'd by a light, so here comes
this letter.

It's said that Metrol loses trains,
But that's not right, it gives us pains
The lack of coord. 'tween Metrol and crew
Under it's control. How about you?

We'd like to see Metrol dynamic
Now, not when it's treat or trick,
And post green its signals ahead,
It can be done, or we'll see red.

So Mr Crabb, give them a shove
Down there at Flinders Street, don't be a dove.
Of trains there are only one-seventy-nine,
Please contrive to run most on time.

—R. V. Ms L.M. Wagstaff

ON-TIME RUNNING

On the morning of 10th January, every suburban train ran within three minutes of schedule (that is, officially on time). More specifically, this remarkable achievement occurred between 4.30am and 9.30am.

Source: *ABC Radio News 11/1/85*

BOX HILL CENTRAL

The Box Hill Transport Centre, or Box Hill Central as it is called, was opened on the 19th of November. I went along the following evening to inspect it.

When I first read about the Transport Centre some years ago I was led to expect a modal interchange, designed for the convenience of passengers transferring between trains and buses. It would also incorporate some shops. I quickly discovered that it is in fact a large enclosed shopping centre built above the railway station, with a bus station on the roof, and an adjacent multi-deck car park. In other words, it is a highly accessible shopping centre, which also serves as a modal interchange.

The main pedestrian entrance is from the corner of Market and Main Streets, where formerly the buses used to wait, conveniently close to the station entrance. Buses are now hidden on the rooftop station, out of sight from street level, and requiring passengers to find their way through the new shops. Market Street and Main Street have been converted to pedestrian malls. The main entrance is marked by a large glass canopy bearing the words **BOX HILL CENTRAL**, and these are repeated above the doors. The only reference to public transport is a very small green and gold *Met* sign bearing the words *train, bus, taxi*, and three little symbols, located at knee level to one side of the entrance, where it can be easily obscured by pedestrians and dogs. It certainly can not be seen from Whitehorse Road.

From inside the entrance doors, the railway station concourse and ticket office are clearly visible, at the right-hand end of the general concourse. The railway concourse is separated from the general shopping area by a floor-to-ceiling glass wall with two pairs of sliding glass doors. Outside each doorway is a single ticket collector's booth. The ticket office occupies the "shop" nearest the station doors.

In contrast to the general shopping concourse which is bright and visually cluttered, the station concourse is plain and bare. At the time of opening, it was still unfinished, with signs of yet-to-be-installed telephones and illuminated timetables. From the station concourse, platforms can be accessed by ramp, escalator, stairs and lift. Two platforms were operational: three and four. At platform level the station is austere. The walls are white-painted concrete blocks, with a narrow band of tiles at the base. Seating is of wooden slats on tubular steel frames. The platforms are bitumen. There appeared to be no station staff on the platforms, which are not visible from the ticket collectors' booths. Each platform is fitted with a bunch of four colour VDU (television) train displays, familiar to travellers on the underground loop.

Emerging from the station into the general shopping concourse, one is confronted by the usual hordes of shoppers with trolleys, pushers and small children moving in all directions. The way to the bus station is marked by an almost invisible green and gold sign, with very small writing, placed high above the entrance to a corridor of shops and beneath a large neon sign announcing **FOOD HALL**. Apparently the position of the sign is supposed to indicate that buses and taxis are to be found at the top of the escalator, half way down the corridor, a subtlety that was lost on me; I walked right past the escalator and was soon lost in a maze of cafe tables and planter boxes. I eventually stumbled across the bus station, having decided to explore the escalator.

The bus station consists of a wide concrete roadway, with steel-framed glass shelters with wooden seats on either side of the road. It is roofed with steel girders and panels. An uninspiring view of rooftops, lamp-posts and wire fences can be enjoyed by the waiting passengers. Although there are powerful lights suspended from the roof, these were not switched on at 8.40pm, and the station was in almost complete darkness. Unlike the railway station, the only way out of the bus station is by an escalator too narrow to allow passing the person in front: too bad if your bus arrives late and you are hurrying to catch a train. From about half-way down the escalator a miniscule green sign saying *trains* can be seen, partly obscured by a supporting column. Fortunately, however, the station entrance

NEW MEMBERS & DONORS

The PTUA welcomes the new members listed below. It thanks the following persons who have been kind enough to make a donation to defray costs.

NEW MEMBERS

Mr L.P. Broadway
Mr M. Cooke
Mr F.T. Copeland
Mrs N. D'Avoine
Mr P.F. Duggan
Mrs Y. Gray
Mr K. Healy
Mr S. Keinan
Mr D. M. Kennedy
Mr A. J. Leyland
Ms B. Pavlidis
Mr F. J. Tinsley
Mr P. Tennison
Mr L.J. Turner
Mr P.F. Woods

DONORS

Mr L. Benzler
Mr D. Bowd
Mr A. Boyne
Mr D.M. Kennedy
Ms C.M. Kilmartin
Mrs B. Milton
Mr K.J. Palmer
Miss C. G. Picone
Mr I. Powell
Mr R.G. Redding
Mr F.W. Regan
Mr W. Thompson
Mr F.J. Tinsley
Mr R. Todd
Mr D.E. Werner
Miss R.J. Wollaston

NEW MEMBERS

Mr A. R. Birrell
Mr D.J. Breheny
Mrs N. Capponi
Ms E. Clark
Mr L.R. Corbin
Mr R.A. Goff
Mr G. Lyall
Mr T.G. Rymer
Mrs E.L. Rymer
Mr T. Sargent
K. Tyers
Mr V. Walker
Ms L.M. Wagstaff

DONORS

Mr D.H.B. Bednall
Dr E. Bednall
Mr D.J. Bedeny
Mrs I. Hart
Mrs S.E. Kennedy
Mr J.K. Lyons
Mr P.J. Smith
Anonymous

BOX HILL CENTRAL (Cont.)

itself is clearly visible through the crowded shopping concourse.

While Box Hill Central will undoubtedly be a commercial success, its functional efficiency as a modal interchange is questionable, and I believe public transport users have been sold short. Matters such as clear direction signs can easily be rectified, but the basic design cannot be altered. Before it embarks on any more such interchanges, the MTA would be well advised to study better examples. The Edgecliff centre in Sydney would be a good starting point.

— Ray Walford

AROUND THE STATE

RE-OPENING OF THE STONY POINT LINE

The Frankston to Stony Point passenger rail service was officially re-opened on Sunday 16th September. After extensive publicity on radio station 3MP, and a speech by Transport Minister Steve Crabb along the lines of "we promised to restore the train and here it is", a rail car set consisting of two power cars and two trailers departed as the first of free promotional trips with the Minister on board. Trips continued for the remainder of the day with 2000 people carried. Certainly the first trip departed with many people standing.

The timetable shows six return trips by rail motor and eight by bus on Monday to Friday, with some trains only running to Crib Point and two buses terminating at West Park (Hastings) and four buses going on to Balnarring. On Saturdays the rail motor makes five return trips; this service is not augmented with buses. On Sundays a passenger train makes two return trips from Flinders Street. There is also one bus making the single journey to Crib Point departing Frankston at 8.40pm.

On Monday 17th September I boarded a rail car at Tyabb at 6.40am. Forty passengers were carried on this first trip to Frankston. The car was operated by a *driver, guard and conductor!* The return journey was timetabled to terminate at Crib Point, but the conductor said that all trains were to operate to Stony Point. The trailer was picked up for the return trip. Eighteen passengers were on the run to Stony Point, and until Tyabb where I alighted, 51 travelled on the outward journey.

— Howard Girdler,
Morrington

LEONGATHA RAIL SERVICE RE-OPENED

Rail passenger services were resumed to Leongatha on the 9th of December after an official re-opening by Mr Crabb, Minister of Transport. [Passenger trains to Yarram had been replaced by buses in 1981, following the recommendations of the Lonie Report.]

Over 3,000 local residents participated in the re-opening which included free trips and inspection of the refurbished Harris cars that were to be used in normal service. Trains make two return trips a day; buses augment the trains with two daily return trips, one of which extends the service to Yarram.

Mr Crabb claimed that the re-introduction fulfilled a promise he made when the service was withdrawn. [In fact it is a partial fulfilment since restoration of the service would provide passenger trains to Yarram.]

Source: *V/LINE Update No. 25*

FLINDERS STREET STATION

In Mid-december, the Minister officially opened the "refurbished" Flinders Street station, but it was then nowhere near complete — much of the concourse was unsurfaced

AROUND THE STATE (Cont.)

and some of the shops were incomplete, while only one shop had been set up.

Work was being carried out around the clock — including routine things like painting the roof — and accounts for the significant over-run in costs on the project, running into hundreds of thousands of dollars. The restaurant, supposed to be a key feature of the redevelopment, was also incomplete. Nonetheless, the standard of shops and platform entrances gives a much-needed uplift to the facilities at this important station.

UNDERGROUND

The Northern Loop — the fourth and last track in the underground rail loop — was brought into service on the 7th of January. Services are being phased in and will be fully operational by 21st January. Trains on western lines from Williamstown to Upfield are able to use the loop. Trains on this loop run in the opposite direction to those on the other three tracks.

Flagstaff Station — the fifth and last station in the loop — will be opened later in the year, yet is thought to be complete, but may be the subject of another industrial dispute.

Source: *ABC Radio News 5 & 7/1/85*

BUNDOORA TRAM EXTENSION

The Premier Mr J. Cain opened the East Preston tramline extension to La Trobe University on 10th January. A free ten-minutely shuttle service is operating between the former terminus at Boldrewood Parade and Dunne Street. Trams display Route 87. Journey time is about four minutes. Passengers travelling from the city must change at Boldrewood Parade.

ALTONA

The rail link between Altona and Laverton is complete and opening should be imminent. Test trains have operated. With \$4.2 million spent on extensions and more on upgrading, it is with amazement that we learn that one of the three stations on the line, namely Mobiltown, was due to be closed from 19th January, and that the only other station in the area, Paisley, is to follow suit two months later.

COUNTRY RAIL PATRONAGE UP

V/LINE increased patronage and revenue by 10.8% in the 1983/4 financial year. V/LINE operates intercity and interurban services.

By promoting use of off-peak country trains through discounting, it has maintained patronage on peak trains while attracting new passengers to off-peak services — patronage having increased by 14% on off-peak services. More passengers were carried in 1983/4 than in any year since 1976.

Source: *Network, Vol. 21, No. 4*

MOUNT GAMBIER

V/LINE has taken over the bus service plying between Warrnambool and Mount Gambier, and now operates a through service to our neighbouring state, connecting with the Warrnambool train and providing a link to Adelaide via the Adelaide/Mount Gambier railway. A day return journey can be made from Warrnambool to Mount Gambier.

Source: *Network, Vol. 21, No. 4*

WE WISH ALL OUR MEMBERS A HAPPY & PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR



WHAT A LONG TIME IT'S BEEN ...

Here's a note to Mr Crabb,
 We hear you're where the transport's at,
 It pertains to travelling abroad
 On those vehicles one climbs aboard.

Take a break from your present chore
 To read this page from our artist sore
 Who finds it more or less a bore
 To wait for half an hour or more.

At certain times of the day and night,
 It seems our trains have taken fright,
 For at the station, not a whisper
 From red rattler or super silver.

So Mr Crabb, why don't you try
 (Without on freeways bleeding the coffers dry)
 With your new men in the Ministry
 To run our trains more frequently?

— R.V.