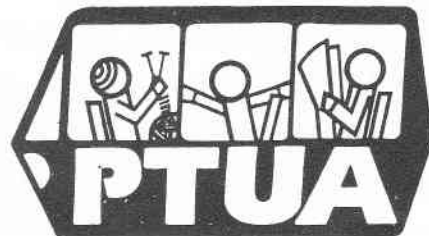


TRANSIT

NEWS AND VIEWS



Volume 13 Number 5 September 1989

The Newsletter of the Public Transport Users' Association Incorporated.
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Notice of Annual General Meeting

Guest Speaker: Roger Pescott,
Shadow Minister for Transport.

General Business

- Annual Report
- Discussion and adoption of PTUA policy on the Very Fast Train
- Election of Council and Office Bearers

5.45 p.m.
Wednesday
18th October 1989

Meeting Room C
R.M.I.T. Glasshouse
360 Swanston Street, Melbourne.

EDITORIAL

This year's annual general meeting should prove to be a lively affair. Firstly, we have the Opposition Transport Spokesman (Roger Pescott), whose views on public transport, from what we can glean from occasional press reports, are a long way from ours. Speakers in the past have generally taken questions from the floor. It is important that we impress Mr. Pescott with the numerical strength of our membership, the quality of our arguments, and the seriousness of the issues. There is plenty of material in this newsletter for ammunition.

Secondly, we have a discussion and the adoption of a PTUA policy on the Very Fast Train proposal. This proposal has uncovered a variety of divergent opinions, which we hope to resolve. If you are interested in the V.F.T., please come and join in the debate.

Finally, the most important function of the A.G.M. is to elect a new council for the coming year. We have a very busy schedule, and we need people capable of sharing the burden. Members are urged to nominate (themselves or their friends) for these important jobs: a nomination form is included in this newsletter.

Even if there is nothing else you do for the Association, please come to the A.G.M.

New Members

We welcome the following new members:

Bus Proprietors' Association	Port Melbourne
Ms M. Chandler	Essendon
City of Fitzroy	
Mr K. J. Congues	The Basin
Conservation Council of Victoria	
Ms D. L. Daly	Coburg
Mr R. W. Demelley	East Brighton
Mr D. Flanagan	East Geelong
Mr M. G. Geegan	Middle Footscray
Ms N. C. Grinblat	Berwick
Mr L. W. Hartnett	Melbourne
Mr F. Lang	Balwyn
Mr R. M. Lilley	Reservoir
Mr R. M. R. Mclean	Fitzroy
Met Marketing	Melbourne
Ms W. E. Moore	Pascoe Vale
Mr B. Paul	Portarlington
Mr M. Ryan	Hampton
Mr P. Ryan	Middle Park
Mr D. Saleeba	St. Kilda
Mr E. Strautins	Windsor
Mr B. Weston	Fairfield
Mr R. F. Nicholson	Mentone

August General Meeting

The third informal general meeting of PTUA members was held at Ross House on Wednesday, 16th August 1989, and was chaired by Patrick O'Connor.

Patrick read a letter which the PTUA had sent to the Minister criticising the new ticket system, and the intended removal of conductors from trams.

The Upfield line was also discussed (see separate article) and the point was made that the real issue behind the Upfield Line conversion is that the Government wants to alienate part of the route for the Western By-pass.

Concern was voiced by a number of members about the new ticket system which the MTA intends to introduce on 1st December. Some members employed by the Met voiced the opinion that it will not be possible to introduce the new system so soon. Other members expressed serious reservations about the Vancouver system which is understood to be the Met's choice and, although the PTUA has not been consulted on the issue, the cost of introducing the system is believed to be \$6.4 million. Members suggested that conductors should be prepared to demonstrate their usefulness for purposes other than selling tickets, such as assisting people to board and alight and providing information; and that it was incongruous to be planning to introduce roving guards on trains while removing conductors from trams. Most women present at the meeting said that, as with trains, they would rather not use trams at night without conductors.

With reservations expressed by one member, the meeting almost unanimously opposed conversion of the Upfield railway to light rail, and the removal of conductors from trams. There was total support for retention of overnight sleeping-car trains to Sydney and Northern NSW; and for the installation of ticket vending machines on some stations, provided that staff were always in attendance.

Thanks are due to Mrs. Bowd and Mrs. Brownbill for providing sandwiches.

Apology!

We apologise to those members who received July's issue of **Transit News and Views** with two blank pages: this was due to a printers' error, and a lack of vigilance on our part. Spare copies are available from the Secretary.

Transit News and Views is edited by Ray Walford.

NEWS DIGEST

State Budget

August's State Budget contained some good news for public transport, but some very nasty shocks as well. The good news all seems to be in the V/Line department; new diesel rail cars for country commuter services; XPTs for the Sydney service. This is what we called for in our submission to STAP, the V/Line Corporate Plan, except that we wanted sleeping accommodation retained on overnight trains; and the MotoRail service to Sydney ought to be retained and made more attractive.

On the Metropolitan front, it was pleasing to see that some of the proposals from "Metplan" received the go-ahead: extension of the Airport West tram one kilometre to Westfield Shoppingtown and design work for electrification from Broadmeadows to Coolaroo. A rail link to Tullamarine Airport is to be "examined".

Unfortunately, the good news was largely overshadowed by three appalling decisions, which are discussed separately below. In the lead-up to the budget, the Association attempted to raise the issue of possible cuts to public transport. Working jointly with the Conservation Council of Victoria, and with the assistance of the public transport unions, we distributed 60,000 cards urging people to protest to Mr. Kennan. We estimate that some 3,000 people did so.

Upfield Light Rail

The decision to go ahead with light rail conversion of the Upfield line in the face of clear community opposition makes a joke of the Government's commitment to consultation with the users.

As explained in previous editions of TN&V, the PTUA wants the rail line upgraded and extended to Coolaroo, together, together with retention of a full tram service in Sydney Road, with measures to improve tram speed and reliability. We have called for an independent review of the Met proposal, similar to that conducted for the Richmond to Brunswick powerline, and that proposed for the Eastern Freeway extension. We are prepared to have our proposals fairly evaluated: why is the Government not prepared to do the same?

Since the Budget decision was announced, the Association has distributed 2000 leaflets to rail passengers highlighting our views, and has liaised with local councils and the Save the Upfield Line Campaign on a joint community campaign to change the Government's decision. We have proposed a public meeting at the Coburg Town Hall in November (details next issue) and a renewed petition campaign. We have also applied under Freedom of Information to see the report on community views prepared by the Government's consultants, which concluded that local people don't want light rail.

Tram Conductors and Station Staff Go

The Association also opposes the Government's new "MetTicket" system. Although we don't object to staff cuts *per se*, and can see a role for ticket vending machines, we believe the Government's proposal is unsafe and unworkable.

"MetTicket" will make travelling by public transport less convenient: before starting a journey, one must locate a MetTicket outlet that is open, which may not be an easy task. The "scratch ticket" system is difficult to understand, especially in Melbourne, where some 20% of the population (and a greater percentage of public transport patrons) are not native English speakers. Tram drivers will be required to sell tickets, which is a recipe for disaster on crowded routes.

However, our most serious concern is safety. Many passenger, especially women and the elderly, feel comfortable using trams because of the presence of the conductor, and feel unsafe on unstaffed railway stations. MetTicket will scare these people away from the public transport system. Ironically, the Met is poised to introduce "conductor-guards" on trains at the same time as it proposes removing conductors from trams. The Association's views on the issue are set out succinctly in the letter to "The Age" reproduced on page 11.

Public Relations Officer Patrick O'Connor addressed a rally of Tramway workers on the issue on 6th September, and the Association has actively sought to convey its views through the media. We are preparing an economic analysis of MetTicket, which we believe will confirm rumours that even the Met has advised Mr. Kennan that the system will *lose* money for at least five years.

Private Bus Cutbacks

A rather vague announcement in the budget spoke of a 15% productivity saving on private bus operations. In late August, the PTUA obtained a copy of the Met's proposal for implementing the "savings": thirty routes to be shut down completely, another 25 to be closed on Saturday afternoons and Sundays, and further cuts to services on 130 routes.

The services to be axed seem to have been chosen by sticking pins in the Met map: heavily patronised services are to go, while some lightly used services escape unscathed. Of the six private services with the highest patronage, two are to be closed (routes 605 and 410), and the others cut back, with the worst hit being route 508, where services are to be cut by 70% in the peak, 60% off peak and abolished on Sundays. Tens of thousands of mostly poor and elderly people are affected.

We had a successful press conference on September 11th to highlight the issue. Speakers included one of our patrons, Dame Phyllis Frost, Robert Hudson (Executive Director, Victorian Council of Social Service), Michael Murphy (National Union of Students) and Linda Parlane (Conservation Council of Victoria). The meeting was chaired by Rev. Barry Prior (Executive Secretary, Commission for Mission, Uniting Church in Australia), whom we also thank for use of the Church's Boardroom as the conference venue.

Follow-up activities include contacting local councils and MPs in badly affected areas, and locally based campaigns around specific services. Petitions are already circulating in Frankston (route 780), Mornington (781) and Prahran/Malvern/Caulfield (605). Any member interested in a local campaign is asked to write to the Secretary.

Other News

PTUA Victory on Yearlies

As reported in the last issue of TN&V, the Association raised its objection to the proposed abolition of Yearly tickets with the relevant Met officials. However, the decisive factor in altering the decision seems to have been an ABC radio show on 3rd July featuring PTUA Secretary Paul Mees and the Transport Minister.

In a discussion on fare systems, Mr. Kennan was asked about Yearly tickets. Clearly unaware of the Met's proposal, he gave a speech about the value of Yearlies, and how he intended to encourage their use! He was more than a little embarrassed when Paul pointed out that abolishing Yearlies was hardly the best way to make people use them! Within a matter of days, we were advised that Yearly tickets had been reprieved.

Train Timetable Changes

We have been advised by MetRail that the timetable reviews of the Frankston/Dandenong and Belgrave/Lilydale lines discussed in our last issue have been postponed until next year.

In the meantime, the cancellation-plagued Frankston line timetable has been again cut back. Three morning trains have been withdrawn (7:05 from Mordialloc, 7:23 Cheltenham and 8:01 Moorabbin) and two in the evening (4:29 to Frankston and 5:24 to Cheltenham). The corresponding "express" services have been altered to stop at the stations served by the withdrawn trains.

The Met believes the changes will make Frankston line services more reliable. A "standby" train to fill-in for cancellations will wait at Mordialloc in the morning peak, and at Flinders Street in the evening. Although the PTUA never welcomes service reductions, there is no point including trains in the timetable if they never actually run. We would be grateful to hear from Frankston line passengers about the effectiveness of the new arrangements.

New "Metlink" Bus

On 11th September, the first of the cross-suburban "Metlink" bus services proposed in MetPlan started operation. It runs from Middle Brighton Station to Lilydale, via Monash University and Ferntree Gully. The service is being operated by Quince's Scenicruisers, the company that was to have taken over the operations of Driver Bus Lines until the latter successfully challenged the Met's decision in the Supreme Court.

Services on the new route, number 634, run every 20 minutes on weekdays and stop at round 6 p.m., except on Fridays, when an hourly service continues until midnight. Saturday services run every 40 minutes and Sunday services once an hour. Although the new route increases services to some poorly served areas, there are causes for concern.

The route is very circuitous, and the express running mentioned in MetPlan is entirely absent. As a result, the travel time from Lilydale to Middle Brighton is a phenomenal **2 hours, 22 minutes**: hardly the sort of speed to entice people out of their cars! Interestingly, to complete the same trip by existing train services (changing at Richmond) would only take one hour and 15 minutes. Other destinations can also be reached more quickly via existing services: Ferntree Gully takes 35 minutes by train and 48 on Metlink, while Monash University can be reached in just over an hour by train and bus via Blackburn, 35 minutes faster than Metlink.

The route duplicates existing services over much of its length, and is costly to operate. Fifteen buses (plus spares) are required for weekday services, and 5 on Sundays. This is far more than any other private bus service in Melbourne. For example, the 605 route, Melbourne's busiest, and one the Met wants to close, requires 8 buses on weekdays and only 2 on Sundays, but carries many more passengers than Metlink 634 is likely to attract.

Melbourne's outer suburbs, and Monash University in particular, certainly need better bus services. However, the inaugural Metlink service seems to be expensive to operate, slow and poorly planned. We hope its successors fare better: perhaps the Met could start talking to the PTUA before it puts buses on the roads!

Docklands Seminar

The Ministry for Planning and Environment is holding a seminar on October 7th to discuss the proposed redevelopment of the docklands. Issues of particular interest to us are the re-development and possible relocation of Spencer Street Station, and extensions and alterations to Collins, Bourke and Spencer Street tram routes. The venue is the Function Room of the World Trade Centre. The program begins at 12.30 with a boat trip to inspect the site, and reconvenes at the World Trade Centre at 1.30 for talks and discussions until 5.30. PTUA members are welcome to attend: there is no charge!

INTERSTATE & OVERSEAS NEWS Services to Sydney

Interstate News

In contrast to most other states, which are expanding their rail systems, the New South Wales Government has announced a vicious cutback in rural rail services. All non-electrified rail services, other than those operated by XPTs, are to be abolished. There will be no trains to Canberra at all, no overnight service to the Holiday Coast and an overnight service to Brisbane without sleepers.

Meanwhile, Queensland's profit-making rail system continues to forge ahead. The new, faster, electrically powered "Capricornian" service between Brisbane and Rockhampton commenced daily operation in July.

Contracts have been let for the design of a track duplication project to increase the number of rail tracks in central Brisbane from two to four, to cater for anticipated increases in peak period patronage.

The Queensland Government has also brought forward by one year plans for a \$400 million, 160km/h express rail link between Brisbane and the Gold Coast (discussed by Darren Room in our July issue). The State's Transport Minister says that the project has been accelerated to cope with rising traffic congestion on roads in the area. The Government regards the rail link, which is to be operational by 1994, as a more effective solution than a freeway. Some other State Governments (and Oppositions) would do well to take note.

In Western Australia, work is proceeding on the electrification of the Perth suburban rail system, while the South Australian Government is studying a proposal to extend the Glenelg tram line into the centre of Adelaide (it currently stops to the South of the main areas of activity).

The Victorian and NSW Transport Ministers announced in July that modern XPT trains will replace the existing "Intercapital Daylight" and "Sydney/Melbourne Express" services. Although the modern rolling stock and higher speed of the XPTs are welcome, particularly as a replacement for the atrocious "Daylight" set, overnight passengers will lose sleepers, dining and club cars and Motorail facilities. Government giveth with one hand and taketh away with the other!

At our meeting with V/Line on 27th July, we called for the retention of these facilities. Management appeared to show some interest in "couchettes" or "economy sleepers", as provided on rail services in Europe and Queensland.

However, the PTUA Council believes that the relatively modern (i.e. "only" 25-30 years old) sleeping cars that will be rendered redundant by the abolition of the "Sydney", "Brisbane Limited" and "Pacific Coast" Expresses should not be allowed to rust away idly. We are looking at trying to persuade a private consortium to lease them from the rail authorities and use them to run a fast, high quality overnight sleeper train to Sydney, offering reasonable fares.

Members interested in assisting with such a venture (or who may know a sympathetic entrepreneur) are requested to write to the Secretary.

Paul Mees

BORDEAUX, France's fourth biggest city, has declared war on the car in a revolutionary programme that has attracted the interest of other big cities, including Paris.

The Bordeaux plan, which would end nearly half a century of trying to adapt the city to the demands of motor vehicles, has taken on a special significance following a government call for urgent solutions to avoid paralysis of the whole Parisian region.

The port's mayor is a Gaullist former prime minister, Mr Jacques Chaban-Delmas, who has decided that partial solutions to traffic problems are a waste of time. A new principle has been decided in which pedestrians and cyclists will have first right to use half the city's streets and that the rights of car drivers will be strictly limited even on main highways.

War on the car

By Paul Webster in Paris

It is hoped that within the next 10 years only the main boulevards, which account for about 25 per cent of Bordeaux's roads, will be designated red where motor traffic will have priority. But even there, the speed limit will be reduced from 60kph to 50kph.

Another 25 per cent of the city's roads will be designated blue with a 30kph speed limit and restricted to delivery vehicles and public transport. This would leave half of Bordeaux's roads as pedestrian and cyclist areas — white roads — broken up by small parks, markets and cafe terraces.

Most medium-sized provincial

towns have reserved the city centre for pedestrians and cyclists but Bordeaux, with its population of 600,000, has the best record for big cities and has already built more than 30 miles of cycle tracks.

Just over 20 years ago, the late president Georges Pompidou, when still prime minister, said that Paris had to be adapted to the car, but this priority has been a mistake, according to the Bordeaux councillor in charge of the new plan, Mrs Helene Desplats. "The idea that one can adapt a town to suit the car is absurd and the equivalent of killing off a city," she said.

Paris is spending about £700 million on urgent public transport improvements, including Metro lines, but there is increasing pressure for a new masterplan instead of partial solutions.

Train and tram plan can blow freeway off the rails

By SHELLEY GRIFFITH

BETTER train, tram and bus services feature in five proposals the Public Transport Users Group say are counters to building the Eastern Arterial Freeway.

The secretary of the association, Mr Paul Mees, said all five options had been put to the Transport Minister but had been rejected because of "lack of finance".

But Mr Mees said the schemes would be half the cost of the \$300 million Eastern Arterial Road and Ringwood Bypass plan.

"Public transport is an alternative to this freeway, which will be an en-

vironmental disaster. George Zangallis (Australian Railways Union) and I do not often agree, but we do on this issue," he said.

Third track

The association's first proposal was to put a third track on the Box Hill line between Box Hill and Ringwood.

"That would be quite cheap in comparison to the freeway — about \$30 million," Mr Mees said.

"The existing train service between Box Hill and Ringwood is overcrowded and way past

capacity.

"A third line would eliminate the need for double-decker trains and for a freeway," he said.

The second and third proposals involve extending tram lines from Mont Albert to Box Hill and from North Balwyn to Doncaster Shopping Town.

"The Mont Albert extension would be partly about getting people to the Box Hill Shopping Centre.

"There are a lot of private schools along that tram run, used by students who travel by rail from stations out past Box Hill. That extension would cost \$4 million and the Balwyn to Doncaster

extension would cost about \$12 million," Mr Mees said.

A railway line from the city to East Doncaster is the fourth proposal.

"This had been planned in the past, with a line running along the centre of the present Eastern Freeway.

"This is the most expensive of our options and it would cost \$100 million," Mr Mees said.

Bus times

The final option revolves around getting commuters to and from railway stations.

"This is a real problem for people who don't live within walking distance

of a station," Mr Mees said. "For \$10 million there would be a total revision of bus times so that people can get off a train, walk off the platform and on to a bus which will leave immediately.

"No new buses would be required, just a change of layouts of bus time tables and terminals with improved provision for car parking and bicycles.

"All this would be more effective than extending the freeway, it would be cleaner for the environment, energy efficient and would be cheaper than the freeway," Mr Mees said.

Threat to Peninsula bus routes — claim

THE Public Transport Users' Association says the Met plans to axe or curtail 13 Mornington Peninsula bus routes.

The association claims it has a Met document outlining 30 bus routes across Melbourne to be closed completely; 25 services to lose all weekend services after 12 noon on Saturday, and a 130 routes to receive cuts to service frequency or hours of operation.

By MELISSA CRANWELL

scrapped, frequency reduced;

- Frankston to Pearcedale — frequency reduced;

- Frankston to Carum — scrapped;

- Frankston to Mount Martha — one trip Monday to Thursday scrapped, three trips Friday scrapped, all services Sunday and public holidays scrapped;

- Frankston to Balnarring — frequency cut to 90 minutes; Sunday service scrapped;

- Cranbourne to

migrants, the poor, young, elderly and all of those who depend on public transport for their mobility. Literally thousands of the most disadvantaged in the community will have their mobility seriously reduced."

"How ironic that a government which claims to have a social justice strategy should show so little regard for the disadvantaged.

"The PTUA is not opposed to measures designed to improve the efficiency of bus services.

Massacre

"However, what the

more efficient and cost effective.

"The private bus sector of the Met needs to go in a direction of being more cost-efficient and effective.

"No services will be scrapped, but reductions in frequency in lightly patronised services is likely to occur.

"Next week (this week) the Met will be having

discussions with private bus operators about the document and there will be no further statements or decisions until after the talks and that will take some time."

The association is planning a campaign of protest. Those interested can contact the association at PO Box 324, Collins Street, Melbourne 3000

Services

The local affected would:

- Franks gal — last scrapped, reduced;

- Franks Heights — Rosedal scrapped, reduced;

- Fran Humphrie: two trips service reduced;

- Fran Delacombe: two trips service reduced;

- Franks wood — last

By HUGO KELLY, transport reporter

A State Government move to axe 30 bus routes was the biggest cut in public transport services in living memory, the Public Transport Users' Association claimed yesterday.

The association's secretary, Mr Paul Mees, said Government plans to reduce services on 130 other bus routes would hit tens of thousands of commuters, particularly the elderly, migrants and children.

According to documents released by the association, the planned cuts mean:

- The 50,000 residents of Mornington, Mount Eliza and Mount Martha would be without public transport on Sundays and public holidays.

Thousands to be hit by bus cuts, says group

- The busiest private bus service, Gardenvale to the city, which has operated for 65 years and carries 3000 passengers a day, would be scrapped.

- Service frequency on one of Melbourne's busiest routes, Moonee Ponds to Alphington, would be cut 70 per cent in peak hours and 60 per cent off-peak.

The Ministry of Transport's contribution to the Government's "social-justice strategy" — a number of outer-suburban services introduced over the past two years — would be eliminated, Mr Mees said.

"A total 25 routes will lose all weekend services after 12 noon Saturdays, and 130 routes will be cut in frequency or hours of operation... the result will be a disastrous reduction in service to

people who rely solely on transport to get around," he said.

The office of the Transport Minister, Mr Kennan, says bus routes are being reviewed and some poorly patronised routes will be altered, but no decisions have been made.

● V Line services have been affected by industrial action over the jobs of 15 railway yard foremen. Most country and interstate train services had to start from outer suburban stations because of bans on the movement of trains in the Melbourne railway yards, a V Line spokesman said.

The dispute over a proposed restructuring of the 15 positions has been notified to the Industrial Relations Commission.

Panel will review extension to freeway

1/9/89

By INGRID SVENDSEN,
urban affairs reporter

A Government-appointed panel will investigate the traffic, environmental and amenity effects of the controversial \$240 million Eastern Freeway Extension.

The Transport Minister, Mr Kennan, announcing the decision yesterday, said the extension needed to be reviewed because of growing concern over environmental issues and in light of problems caused by the new South-Eastern Arterial Road.

The move was cautiously welcomed by community groups opposed to the freeway extension but criticised by Ringwood Council, which said that the Ringwood bypass must proceed.

The Opposition transport spokesman, Mr Pescott, also attacked Mr Kennan, saying there had been reviews and reports "ad infinitum" on the issue but no solution to traffic problems in the eastern corridor.

The panel, headed by a lawyer and part-time member of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, Ms Helen Gibson, will also include an engineer and a botanist. Ms Gibson also headed the inquiry into the MCG light towers.

Mr Kennan said the inquiry was expected to take six months. Its terms of reference would be developed after community consultation. Draft terms of reference include assessing the traffic, environmental and amenity impacts of the proposal and whether traffic problems could be solved by modifying existing roads.

The panel is also likely to look at potential uses for the creek valleys.

The plan to build an eastern arterial road from the end of the freeway at Doncaster to Springvale Road and a Ringwood bypass linking the freeway extension to the Maroondah Highway at Mount Dandenong Road, first mooted in 1975, was originally supported by all councils along the route.

Recently Box Hill withdrew its support; Nunawading and Doncaster and Templestowe deferred their decisions pending the results of the latest Conservation Forests and Lands flora and fauna study of the creek valleys.

The Government was also placed under pressure by the results of last month's council elections, where six anti-freeway candidates were elected to Nunawading Council and two mayors who had strongly backed the plan were dumped.

Mr Kennan said that, because of changing community attitudes, there was now a "real question" about whether the Government could continue to build roads in creek valleys.

Mr Kennan said that because of changing community attitudes, there was now a "real question" about whether the Government could continue to build roads in creek valleys.

Mr Kennan indicated that the Government had been waiting for results of the council elections but denied that the success of anti-freeway candidates had put pressure on the Government.

The South-Eastern Arterial Road — which angry residents may consider blockading because of the noise problem — was also a factor.

The mayor of Ringwood, Councillor Lillian Rosewarne, said the council was extremely concerned that the bypass, which was crucial to plans to upgrade Ringwood to a district centre, might be delayed.

The Koonung-Mullum Forestway Association, an umbrella group of five residents' organisations, congratulated the Government for "having the courage to reassess the issue in the light of widespread community concerns".

But the president of the association, Mr Ross Hartnell, said that it should have wide terms of reference to conduct a broad inquiry into transport planning in Melbourne.

FROM THE PAPERS

EDITORIAL OPINION

Monday 4 September 1989

Freeway rethink is good politics

WHEN the plan to build an eastern arterial road from the end of the Eastern Freeway at Doncaster was first mooted in 1975, all the municipal councils along the route were in favor of it. The big advantage of the freeway extension, they argued, was that it would provide quick access to and from the city for outer suburban residents. Since then, however, the anti-freeway movement has been gathering strength. Some of the opposition is based on environmental considerations. The public is no longer content to see creek valleys sacrificed to the cause of the motor car. There is also the experience of residents living near to the South-Eastern Arterial Road extension. Some have found the noise levels intolerable: so much so that they are talking of blockading the road in protest.

The change of public heart was reflected in last month's council elections which saw six anti-freeway candidates elected to Nunawading Council while two mayors who had strongly backed the plan were dumped. What is now a chorus of disapproval could — and most probably would — become an uproar by the time the next state elections come around. Recognising this, the Government has decided to review the project because of what the Transport Minister, Mr Kennan, calls "changing community attitudes". The review panel will include a lawyer, an engineer and a botanist. The terms of reference will be decided after community consultation.

To see the Government's change of heart as a back down or a sign of weakness would be a mistake. There is nothing wrong with governments rethinking their strategies on such matters as freeways in response to public concerns. Indeed, it is something to be encouraged. It may be that when the panel has completed its review, it will find that there are no other viable or affordable alternatives. However, deep public concerns have been voiced, and the Government would have been remiss if it had stubbornly pressed on with the project, regardless of objections.

Bus cut plan sparks anger

THIRTY private bus routes would close and 25 routes would lose weekend services under proposals outlined in a draft document being considered by the State Government.

However, a spokesman for the Transport Ministry last night said proposals were for discussion only.

Social welfare, conservation, student and church groups expressed outrage that such cutbacks to private bus services could even be considered.

The document was released yesterday by the Public Transport Users' Association in a bid to scuttle Government plans to

MEETING REPORTS

Brunswick Street Tram Cuts

On 7th August, Association officers, together with the mayors of Fitzroy and Northcote, met the Transport Minister's personal advisor and the Deputy Director General of Transport to protest at the cuts to tram services in Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, and St. George's Road, Northcote (see report last issue).

The Met had prepared a complicated document purporting to show that services had actually increased (one is reminded of the scene in Orwell's "1984", in which "Big Brother" cuts the chocolate ration, but demonstrations are organised to thank him for increasing it). Fortunately, we had copies of timetables from before the changes and after, and simple arithmetic showed that the number of trams down Brunswick Street and St. George's Road each day had been cut by over 30%.

We have been promised a response from the Minister. Meanwhile, members using the affected services report continual overcrowding in peak and off-peak periods.

Timetables

We also met with the MTA's timetable production team to discuss ways of making tram and bus timetables (MetRail produce their own) more informative and easier to read. We raised matters like better maps, the need to show details of connecting train services, and typeface size. The timetable people talked about the resource constraints under which they operate and some future proposals.

A number of our suggestions were taken on board and we will also be having a "look in" on the production of some future timetables. We thank Ms. Biruta Bourke, MTA Product Development Manager, for arranging what proved to be a very useful meeting.

Meetings with V/Line

Two useful meetings were held on 27th July and 30th August with David Hardy, Marketing Manager of Rail Passenger Services, V/Line, to discuss a number of members' concerns and suggestions for service improvements.

At the first meeting we discussed some issues of immediate concern, and left a list of suggestions covering the Western half of Victoria, for consideration by V/Line.

We discussed the following topics:

- The possibility of interim improvements on the Inter-capital Daylight to Sydney, pending its replacement by an XPT service in 1991.
- The possibility of providing "couchette" sleeping accommodation on the planned overnight XPT service. This would depend on co-operation by the NSW State Rail Authority, since the service will

be operated from a pool of NSW XPT's (and one owned by V/Line).

- The problem of drinking on country trains: we were made aware of the trials now being undertaken by V/Line.
- Ticket selling and booking arrangements at Spencer Street: a new ticket office is being designed, and a more flexible service is promised.
- Improvements in the catering area were promised, with the appointment of a new catering manager.

At the second meeting our suggestions were discussed in some detail. Although no timeframe was suggested, we were told that possibly 60% of our ideas would be implemented. This was very encouraging, and made the exercise seem worthwhile.

We are now preparing a set of proposals covering Eastern Victoria (Shepparton, Albury, Bairnsdale and Leongatha lines, and bus services); please send your ideas (or complaints) to the Secretary.

We also asked that PTUA be involved in the review of the design for new Diesel Multiple Unit trains. We agreed to compile and forward to V/Line a list of desirable specifications for these trains. (One question which was raised but not answered was whether first class seating should be offered.) Please send your ideas to the Secretary.

Central Area Public Transport Study

A meeting was held on 30th August with Bernie Carolyn, of the Met Planning Department, to discuss the scope of the Central Area Public Transport Study (as proposed by the Central Area Transport Study, C.A.T.S.), and the extent of PTUA's involvement in it. The PTUA will be involved in the design of the consultant's brief, a process which is expected to be completed by December. We asked for funds to be made available to PTUA to assist in the preparation of submissions to the consultant; no promises were given, but the idea wasn't dismissed; we remain hopeful. The actual study is expected to proceed in 1990.

VFT Workshop

PTUA member Byron Jones attended a workshop held by the Australian Conservation Foundation and the Australian Railways Union in Sydney on 16th September, to discuss concerns about the Very Fast Train proposal. Byron expressed the PTUA's current concerns with the VFT but stressed that we do not yet have an official policy.

Workshop participants supported the concept of higher speed rail transport for Australia, but recognised the need for a comprehensive national public inquiry into the VFT proposal, associated developments and land transport needs of Australia. A draft Senate submission will be made available to the PTUA for comment, amendment or endorsement.

Melbourne's Growing Traffic Problems — The Issues

The following is a summary of a set of papers presented at the Road Corporation's Senior Officers' Conference on 24th July 1989. The PTUA thanks the Corporation and authors Peter Greig (Manager, Program Development) and John Miles, for permission to use their material. The views expressed in the papers are not necessarily Roads Corporation policy.

Road Travel is Growing

The demand for road travel has been increasing more rapidly than either the population or the economy:

	growth rate % p.a.		
	urban	rural	total
road travel (vehicle-km)	3.4	4.2	4.0
truck travel (tonne-km)	7.0		
population	0.8	1.4	1.0
transport fuel (motor spirit)			2.0
economy (gross domestic product)			3.0
public transport	2.1	6.0	2.1
rail freight (tonnes)			<1.0

These figures appear to indicate that trip frequencies and/or trip lengths are increasing for both passengers and freight. This could be a reflection of:

- urban sprawl,
- more dispersed production/distribution networks,
- more licensed drivers and
- more cars per household.

There are no signs of road travel demand abating in the next few years. This indicates that the transport share of the cost of goods and services is increasing over time, which is apparently at odds with national economic imperatives. The possible implications are:

- greater demands for road improvements and traffic management,
- greater urban congestion and pollution,
- pressure for urban travel demand management,
- demands for better urban public transport.

Traffic congestion is increasing

Urban traffic congestion is increasing, judging by peak hour travel times in Melbourne. Congestion is emerging as a major issue, being coupled with air pollution and road safety. Peak travel times on Melbourne's radial travel routes have increased by as much as 23% in some cases.

This is occurring despite traffic flow and road capacity improvements, and recent enhancements to public transport.

Government spending is likely to fall

All forms of government spending have been constrained in response to macro-economic problems. Excessive levels of foreign debt requiring excessive debt servicing levels, together with the trade and current account deficit and electoral limits on taxation revenue, have led to the Federal Government cutting expenditure. The resulting budget surpluses are being used to retire some of the debt, and State governments are being exhorted to follow the same fiscal policy.

It is likely to take several years of tight fiscal and monetary policy to bring external debt under control. So government expenditure is likely to remain constrained for several years, even under a change of government.

Doing more with less.

With urban travel increasing at about 3.4% per year, and the cost of urban road improvements increasing rapidly, the opportunities for solving urban congestion and related problems with road improvements are becoming more constrained. Other means to be canvassed might include:

- demand management,
- urban development alternatives,
- more public transport, and
- telecommuting, or working from home.

None of the solutions will be neat or easy. The challenge for the Roads Corporation is to begin the search for workable alternatives.

Suburban sprawl creates problems.

One possible cause of the travel growth trend is increasing urban sprawl. Low density development on the fringes, and central urban decline, is clearly apparent in Melbourne. The extended development of Melbourne since the Second World War was made possible by the railways, which were able to carry commuters long distances from their suburban homes to central city workplaces. This urban development trend was later strengthened by planning decisions, which encouraged urban extensions along transport corridors. The likelihood of public transport systems being supplanted by private transport was to be accommodated by radial freeways.

The motor car provided easy access to a vast range of activities not limited to the availability of public transport. The high quality road system hastened the changing life style. Urban densities declined to match the new freedoms, and commercial activities, particularly retail, were designed on the basis that car access was the norm rather than the exception.

While these changes brought benefits to many, there were significant costs:

- Social disruption: schools, hospitals and other services in inner areas become under utilised as their more mobile clients move away;
- Infrastructure costs increase in newer corridors. Recent studies suggest additional costs of \$30–50,000 for each new outer area home;
- Environmental problems: the increased use of cars causes increased exhaust emissions, which are currently regarded as significant contributors to atmospheric pollution, including ozone depleting and greenhouse gases. Road connections from corridors to the urban area are perceived by some to threaten species of flora and fauna;
- Accidents: increased car use will almost certainly lead to a higher level of road accidents;
- Commuting becomes more difficult, as the length of the journey to work increases;
- Social problems: the effectiveness of public transport is reduced, and its cost increased, in the new low density suburbs, leading to low public transport patronage, and significant disadvantages for those who cannot, or do not wish to, travel by car.

Containing the sprawl.

There are ways of encouraging greater urban density and reducing transport costs, in the context of citizens' rights and propensities to choose their own residential and work locations.

Government policies designed to reduce the negative effects of suburban sprawl include dual occupancy, district centres, parking limitation in the City and Southbank, METRAS, Metplan and the Fairway system.

Other measures may need to be considered to achieve the optimum balance in the transport system. A shift in private transport charges from lump sums to distance based systems, or Area Charges that seek to balance demand with road space in congested areas such as the CAD may be appropriate.

The construction of ring roads such as the Metropolitan Ring Road, and North/South routes through the inner/middle suburbs such as Punt Road, rather than radial routes which encourage urban sprawl, are visible symbols of Government policies being implemented.

LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS

Country Trains and Others

My recent short stop-over at Gisborne gave me a chance to experience country train travel for the first time in about ten years. No more red rattlers it seems! The new trains

to Gisborne are really comfortable and quite clean; and, as far as V/Line–The Met are concerned, comparatively attractive! Unfortunately, that's all the praise I can give. Spencer Street station is actually worse, in my opinion, than it was ten years ago. Its ugliness was not improved by the automatic doors which seemed to be always out of order. The queues to buy tickets were incredible. The counter seemed to be understaffed; is this due to the new computer system? It took 20 minutes to buy my ticket; thank goodness I was very early! Surely there could be a better way to provide service to customers (admittedly it was school holiday time). Oh, and back to the actual train trip — the roving guard/conductor/ticket inspector was a very good idea.

Back to Metropolitan matters: I believe that a scheme once existed here of rewarding public transport staff for good work by awarding them a "Conductor of the Month" prize (or some such thing). How did this scheme operate? Do you know whether it worked (raising staff morale and commuter involvement)? Why is it no longer around? Could it be revived, maybe in a new format?

Looking forward to the next issue of Transit News and Views.

Fiona King, St. Kilda

Very Fast Train

In a recent newsletter, the Association invited members' opinions on the Very Fast Train proposal.

I think the Association should give very strong support both to the proposal itself and to the Gippsland route. I doubt we have any choice if we are to look upon ourselves as a "pro-train" group, as the proposal is probably the most exciting railway proposal to emerge in Australia in the latter half of this century. (The Alice Springs–Darwin proposal, now abandoned, would be the only one to run it close.) The Albury corridor is already well served by trains. The Gippsland proposal will lead to much improved services for the Gippsland towns and a major extension to towns such as Orbost and Cooma, which no longer have services. It will establish a direct link for the first time between Gippsland and N.S.W. For any rail fan, the project must be very, very attractive.

Conservation issues have been raised and these are of course important, but, in the long run, the project must be considered as a triumph for conservation. Imagine the pressure that will build up over the years for more road links via Gippsland with N.S.W. if a railway alternative does not exist. We all know the damage done to the environment by the construction of major roads and the heavy traffic they attract.

Alan Gourley, Glen Waverley

The Mountain High Railway Company

On a recent trip via southern New South Wales I drove through the high country agricultural, grazing and forestry areas around Tumbarumba, Batlow and Tumut. I was particularly interested to assess the practicality of one alternative route for the Very Fast Train which has been proposed to link Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne.

However, the purpose of this article concerns the past and present railway situation in this part of NSW. All three of these towns were formerly served by the railways, viz the Wagga Wagga to Tumbarumba line and the line from Cootamundra to Tumut and Batlow, but these lines are now closed. The former closed many years ago whilst the latter was closed in recent years.

This was my first visit to the region although I have travelled the Hume Highway, which runs parallel to the west, on many occasions. I was pleasantly surprised on arrival at Tumut to see some carriages parked at the old railway station. On investigation I found that a railway preservation society, named The Mountain Highway Railway Co. Pty. Ltd., had set up its office in the former goods shed at the station and was operating tourist trains on weekends and Wednesdays (2 p.m. departure from Tumut).

The society has a few old passenger carriages and another one, in the old clerestory roof style, being built on site. There are also two diesel shunting locomotives to haul the trains and some wagons for track maintenance work.

A voluntary worker at the station told me that trains were being operated for about 17 kms along the track from Tumut and it was the aim to re-open the line all the way to the picturesque town of Batlow, higher up into the mountains. Batlow is in the centre of a fruit-growing district and well known for its apples and the "Mountain Maid" brand of canned fruit, plum puddings, etc. The railway line, which is still intact, enters Batlow on a steep up-grade passing through the sprawling "Mountain Maid" co-operative fruit cannery complex. Tumut is a vigorous centre with two large modern wood panel manufacturing plants which utilise the extensive pine plantations in the region. One must wonder about the lack of enterprise by the New South Wales State Rail Authority in closing the Tumut—Batlow branch line which is well placed to serve the Sydney and Melbourne markets with fruit and timber products. It would also make more sense to transport logs to the Australian Newsprint Mills near Albury by rail than by road trailers.

Let us wish The Mountain High Railway Company every success in their endeavours to preserve the Tumut—Batlow line and their tourist train service. Perhaps if the VFT route via Tumut is adopted it will again be possible to travel by train from Sydney or Melbourne to Tumut and even to Batlow.

David Bowd

Public transport can be made more efficient without sacking

from R. Walford, president of the Public Transport Users Association

It is unfortunate that tram conductors and railway station staff should have to be the sacrificial victims of past neglect of the public transport system.

Cutting staffing levels is not the only way to improve productivity in public transport. The PTUA has suggested, in its response to Met-plan, a number of ways in which trams and trains could be deployed more efficiently.

Instead of running all trams to the end of the line nearly empty, some trams could be turned around at intermediate destinations, as is done with trains, thus reducing the number of trams needed to carry the same number of passengers.

The use of articulated trams on heavily patronised routes would double the productivity of crews.

Productivity could also be improved by running trams faster; this means strengthening the fairway system, which at present is ineffective on all but totally segregated routes, and giving trams first priority at traffic lights.

At an average 38 kilometres an hour, Melbourne's trains are among the slowest in the world (Sydney's trains average 45 kilometres an hour); a 25 per cent productivity gain could be made simply by running them 10 kilometres an hour faster. This would also attract more passengers to the system.

Flinders Street and Spencer Street, the underground loop stations, and places like Box Hill and

Glen Waverley, which are staffed throughout their hours of operation, do not suffer from the vandalism that afflicts less well patronised stations. These busy stations should have ticket machines to supplement the staff and reduce queueing at peak periods. But to replace staff entirely with ticket machines in the quieter stations is inviting vandalism; how long will these machines remain in working order?

Passengers do not want a completely automated transport system, they want one that is fast and efficient and staffed by friendly, helpful people. By all means, let's have a more productive public transport system, but not a dehumanised one.

Ray Walford,
Melbourne.

TRANSIT NEWS AND VIEWS

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PUBLIC TRANSPORT USERS' ASSOCIATION

Offers of assistance.

With a number of campaigns on the boil, we urgently need assistance for such things as handing out leaflets, setting up publicity material at meetings, addressing and posting mail, and preparing the newsletter for delivery (one Saturday afternoon every second month). If you would like to help, or could be available to help at short notice, please complete the form below and return it to:

The Secretary,
PTUA,
Box 324 Collins Street P.O.,
Melbourne 3000.

Name (please print)

Home address

Telephone (work) (home)

I am willing to undertake the tasks ticked below:

Hand out leaflets:	morning peak	[]
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Send articles from my local newspaper		[]
Prepare material (e.g. typeset, graphic design)		[]

Other (please specify)

Sept 1989

Signature

PUBLIC TRANSPORT USERS' ASSOCIATION INC.

Election of office bearers and council members.

Nominations are called for candidates for election to the following positions:

President
Vice-President
Secretary
Treasurer
Public Relations Officer
7 (seven) ordinary Council members.

Nomination for Council

I wish to nominate (*).....

as a candidate for election as (#).....

dated this day of 1989.

Member's signature

printed name

I consent to being nominated as a candidate for election to the above position.

Candidate's signature

(*) Print the name of the candidate (you may nominate yourself).

(#) Specify the position, e.g. Ordinary Council member.

Nominations must be delivered to the Secretary, Box 324, Collins Street P.O. no later than October 11th 1989.