

# TRAIN TRAVELLERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Registered by Australia Post -  
Publication No. VBG 3454



**JUNE 1982**

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Associations Annual General Meeting is almost upon us once again and we look forward to seeing members in attendance at 5.30pm on Thursday 29 July. The venue this year is the Jacaranda Room on the 2nd Floor of the Victoria Hotel, 215 Little Collins St., Melbourne.

For the past two years the Chairman of VicRail has addressed the meeting but we are pleased to report that on this occasion the MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT THE HON. STEVE CRABB MLA has agreed to deliver the annual address. Members at the meeting will hear the President, Secretary, and Treasurer deliver the Annual Reports and have the opportunity to ask questions. The election of office bearers for 1982/83 will then take place.

Formal notice of the meeting is enclosed with this issue together with a nomination form for the annual elections. We urge all members to attend and demonstrate to the Minister, the Government and the media that we are a strong organisation representing the travelling public and that our demands for an equitable allocation of funds and improvements to services have some force behind them.

## Major Goal In Sight

Since its formation, the Train Travellers Association has campaigned to have user representation involved in the management of the railways. This goal is now within sight. A central task force to advise the Minister on all transport functions has been formed and our Secretary, Ken McIntyre, along with a nominee of the RACV, represents the community of transport users. We will also be represented on the Metropolitan Transit Authority Task Force (metropolitan public transport) and the State Transport Authority Task Force (country public transport) which are presently being formed.

Our Association can only succeed in obtaining improved public transport if we can point to the evidence that this is what the community wants. Because of this it is vital that the Association continue to grow, as the strength of our voice depends on the strength of our organisation.

When the TTA was formed it was laid down in the constitution that it would not have any affiliation with any political party. We stand by that ideal. In the recent state election, allegations of political bias were levelled against the Association. Before the election we

developed our own plan of what we believed should be done to improve public transport. We have also, at times, spoken out against policies which we have felt downgraded public transport. The fact that one party has adopted many of our proposals does not mean that we support that party, but we can be hopeful that in the future some of the proposals may be implemented.

The first priority for action on the railway system must surely be the task of lifting reliability through improved maintenance and automatic signalling. However public transport depends heavily on the feelings and expectations of the public. It is essential to have the impact of a new fixed rail route to demonstrate to people that a new era has arrived. Even if funds are very short the government should carry out at least one major extension to the network - perhaps the light rail eastern freeway link to Doncaster, or the light rail North road route to Ferntree Gully via Monash and VFL Park, or the outer circle connection between Alamein, East Malvern, Chadstone and Hughesdale.

When an individual chooses to use public transport rather than private transport he saves the community money because of reduced road congestion, reduced accident probability and reduced pollution. That individual will be encouraged to make such a choice if he perceives a private financial benefit also. This can be done through the restructuring of motoring costs, changing registration and insurance costs into a petrol tax. The individual would thus make a significant saving every time he chooses public transport, and his car would still be available when he needed it. Anyone who drives less than 25,000 km/year in a 4 cylinder car or 17,000 km/year in a 6 cylinder car will save money.

The idea has been recommended by the all-party Parliamentary Committee on the Conservation of Energy resources and the Minister of Transport has previously spoken in favour of the proposal. The International Energy Agency has recently stated that Australia may now be in a position to raise retail taxes on petrol as a conservation measure. We therefore call on the Government to immediately implement the recommendation of their Parliamentary Committee. Will you, as members of the Association, write to your local member urging the abolition of registration and third party insurance in favour of a petrol tax.

- Dr DOUG SHERMAN

## TAKE AN EXPRESS . . . . . TO FRANKSTON

It is to be hoped that with a new government and a proposed shake-up in administration of transport authorities in Victoria, some imaginative thinking will be injected into transport planning. Some years ago, VicRail commenced rail triplication projects as if they were the only way to run express trains. Most of these projects are in mothballs owing to lack of funds.

The fact of the matter is, that although triplication can provide improved servicing, triplication isn't necessary -- just planning. Thirty years ago, the South Australian Railways ran express trains on the Adelaide to Merino line. Most of the line was single track! If the SAR can do it on single track, VicRail could surely manage expresses on the double track to Frankston.

An express can cut the journey time from Melbourne to Frankston to 50 minutes. The express proposed here would take 54 minutes, or 12 minutes better than the "all stops", and could fit in the existing timetable with minimum alteration. Clearly, surveys of passenger needs would have to be carried out prior to embarking on large-scale express running, but up to 2 express trains could comfortably be run in the morning and evening peaks.

The 5.29pm from Flinders Street could, for example, run express, stopping at Caulfield, Cheltenham, Chelsea, then all stops to Frankston, arriving at 6.23pm (54 mins travelling). The 5.24 from Flinders Street could be terminated at Cheltenham at 5.54 (instead of Mordialloc). Again, the 5.15pm could run express, making use of the fact that the previous train runs short to Mordialloc.

If additional expresses were required after the 5.29pm, the 5.26pm via the loop could run express to Caulfield, express to Cheltenham, all stops to Chelsea, and express to Frankston, arriving at 6.28pm. An example of a more substantial re-organisation could include running the 5.29pm from Flinders Street (express), stopping at Caulfield, Cheltenham, Chelsea, and Frankston, arriving at 6.19pm (50 minutes). The 5.12pm via loop would be terminated at Aspendale, while an "all stops" would follow the 5.29pm, from Aspendale.

- ROBIN VOWELS

## A NEW ERA IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT

One of the major issues on which the present Labor State Government was elected to office at the April election, was its commitment to improve Public Transport and rectify the damage done to the system by previous State Liberal Governments.

The Cain Government has lost no time in honouring its mandate and commitment. The Transport Minister Mr Crabb has set in motion sweeping changes to the transport sector.

The major thrust of the Government's new policies centres on the reorganisation of the States Transport administration and re-arrangement of functions among four new transport authorities which will replace all the existing authorities. The four new transport authorities will be:

### 1. The Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA)

This authority will take over the metropolitan operations of the Victorian Railways Board and replace the Melbourne Underground Rail Loop Authority and the Tramways Board. The MTA will operate suburban trains, trams, government and private buses, contract with the latter and regulate taxis. It will have its own financial management, powers to borrow money, develop its own land and property etc.

Consultative bodies consisting of traveller, worker, management and local Government will be formed to advise the MTA directly on matters affecting its operations.

### 2. State Transport Authority (STA)

This Authority will take over Country passenger and freight operations from Vicrail, and contract with country bus operators. The authority will be similar in composition to the MTA with similar powers and responsibilities, and regional boards to advise it.

### 3. Road Construction Authority

The RCA will be responsible for all road building and maintenance and will take over the combined functions of the existing CRB and West Gate Bridge Authority. Members of the

authority will be drawn from management, employees, users and local government.

### 4. Road Safety & Licensing Authority

This Authority will have responsibility for research, establishment of vehicle and road design standards, traffic management, control over traffic signals, driver licensing etc.

Its composition will be similar to the RCA but will be strengthened with representatives from the medical profession and planning bodies. It will also have a number of regional boards.

To implement these changes the Minister has constituted a Central Task Force consisting of the Chairmen of Vicrail, Tramways, the TRB, CRB, Ministry Of Transport, representatives of the transport unions, bus proprietors and Road Transport Operators. The TTA through its Secretary Ken McIntyre, represents Users. This Task Force will set objectives and responsibilities for the four new authorities.

Each new authority will also have its own task force with similar functions and duties with respect to its own authority. Again the TTA is represented on the MTA and STA as the users voice.

The various study teams and task force groups will have to present their reports etc. by end December to enable the Government to have all legislation ready to implement these changes by the start of the next financial year.

The TTA has lobbied for years for user representation on the transport policy making authorities. We are pleased with the new initiatives and will co-operate wholeheartedly with the Government on the resultant changes. We have already submitted our initial response to the Government. Being a totally voluntary organisation, we will not be in a position to match the resources of the Government bodies on the task forces, but we will strive to put the users views and demands, on all aspects, to the Government.

It must be remembered that public dis-satisfaction and resentment at the years of wanton neglect of public transport led to the defeat of the previous Liberal Government at the last State election.

The photograph below shows work in progress at Werribee station in conjunction with electrification of the line. Projects such as this must be a high priority for the Metropolitan Transit Authority.



Photo - Courtesy of NEWSRAIL

### GOOD NEWS FROM SANDRINGHAM BRANCH

The Sandringham Line Branch Committee is pleased to report that there have been some improvements to their services and that they are contributing to achieve these improvements.

1. The red rattlers have been replaced by 3 car silver sets on
  - all day Sunday
  - Saturday afternoon and evening every third train Saturday morning
  - every week night from 7.25 ex Flinders St until 10.55pm. (Last two trains are red rattlers).
  - every week day from 9.44am until 1.44pm (in Flinders St).
2. The Sunday bus service has doubled. A bus now meets every train at Sandringham from the first train at 9.00am ex Flinders St to 5.00pm in Flinders St (note the last train is at 11.33pm)

These improvements are the result of the combined efforts of the Sandringham Line Branch Committee members, local railway staff, Railways Operations Management and the new Minister for Transport.

Another piece of good news from Sandringham is that one of our committee members Graham Ihlein has been elected to the State Parliament as the new (Labor) member for Sandringham. It is useful to note that our previous "State" member Max Crellin was also a member of our 1981/82 committee.

At the recent Annual General Meeting most of the previous committee were re-elected. The office bearers for the coming year are:

|            |                 |               |
|------------|-----------------|---------------|
| President: | Wes Maley       |               |
| Secretary: | David Shaw      |               |
| Treasurer: | Frank Boyle     |               |
| Ass. Sec.: | Madge Robertson |               |
| Committee: | Graham Ihlein   | Marie Soulsby |
|            | Margaret Fraser | Rod Bryant    |
|            | Peter McBride   | Rob McNeil    |

The next public meeting will be on Tuesday 21 September, at 25 Abbott St. Sandringham at 8.00pm. The planned topic for the evening's address is "The New Transport Authority".

- DAVID SHAW

### THE SEAT OF THE PROBLEM

Concern must be expressed about the new fabric covered seat pads now being fitted to VicRail's first series silver trains.

Observation of initial passenger reaction is favourable when one considers the numerous types of overheight mini seat pads they have endured over the past eight years.

The new 50mm seat pads are covered in a loose fitting fabric cover and consist of a centre flat slab section flanked by sloping wings rising 25mm to the edges, all of which is laminated to a seat metal pan - except for the wings it is a return to the flat pads which caused widespread complaints when the silver trains were first introduced in 1972 and subsequently replaced by the current contoured vinyl pad in 1974.

The height of the fabric seat pads installed is 475mm rising to 500mm at the sides compared to 465/485mm for the contoured pads and 450mm for the original flat pads - growing each time the pads were improved. Published research data on seating design gives a seat height of 440mm as desirable for a normal sitting position sloping back 3° to 5° to suit most persons.

This overheight problem could have been overcome by firstly concaving across the seatpad to place more foam beneath the buttocks that carry most of the body's weight and less foam in the centre which would aid in relieving pressure on the base of the spine - not possible with a flat pad.

Secondly by crowning the pads concave curvatures from back to front where they could blend into a waterfall type front edge that help in reducing the pressure on the thigh muscles and nerves so as not to restrict blood circulation.

If a contoured dished seat pan was used under the foam instead of the flat metal pan, a design gain would be found in providing constant support to the foam in its own to support passengers weight, and keep the fabric cover taut.

A simple way to qualify these facts is to place one of the original contour vinyl squab(back) pads in place of an existing seat pad. The overheight problem is then significantly reduced aided by the waterfall effect of the front edge of the pad so installed.

The new back pad with its straight line slab design like the seat pad, gives very little lateral support and no obvious lumbar support for the lower back region. The almost upright position of the back of the existing GRP Seat shell does not aid in the design of a squab pad which should be contoured concave across and convex vertically (crowned) to support the sitter in the small of the back. This allows the persons back to relax into its natural "s" curve and so the body weight is correctly distributed to the buttocks and thighs.

Back pain is one of the most chronic complaints in the western world, and often poor seating design and lack of awareness of healthy sitting postures are contributing factors. It should be recognised that whilst a lot of foam may appear comfortable at first sight, it may not prove so in reality.

Whilst the use of fabric is more acceptable with our hot summer temperature, it must be questioned for use in trains with opening windows that can be left open overnight as is so often the case. A heavy thunderstorm and we have a water sodden cover for our seat.

Even the new airconditioned Comeng trains have certain shortcomings with respect to lumbar support and in the thigh pressure area. A design fault that may prove difficult to correct is the serious lack of leg room especially if two opposite passengers have briefcases beneath their seat edge, even more so if they are seated next to the windows as the car side curvature can position one persons feet almost beside them.

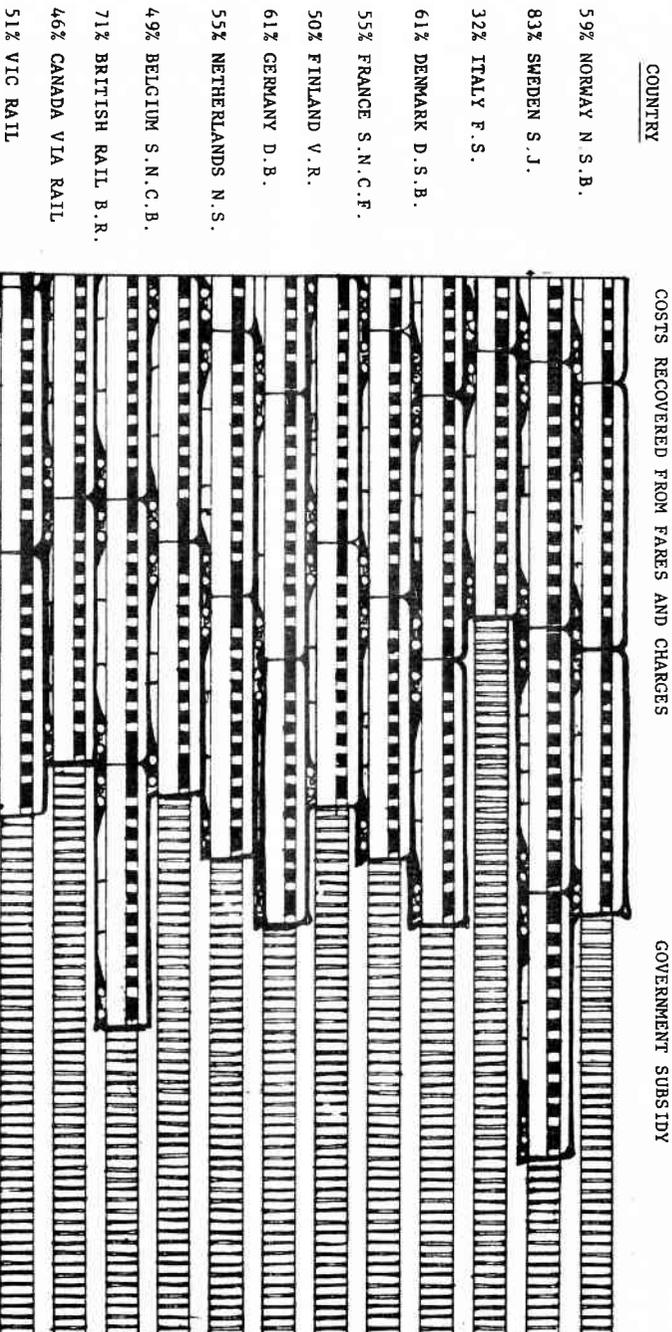
The non alignment of the seats to the window frames and the oversupply of folddown seats come wheelchair spaces should be questioned. True, we must have wheelchair spaces, but they should be more relative to the position of "on train staff" especially at unmanned stations because of varying platform heights - even at the new Museum station on the loop there is the need to provide portable ramps for wheelchairs to enter all trains.

What is needed is an appreciation of the many studies of ergonomics and anthropometrics available - simply the respect of the human body form.

- GRANT GEDDEL

No rail system in the Western World is wholly self financing. A cost recovery rate of 55 per cent is the average for most rail systems in Western countries.

(7)



(6)

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT TRAFFIC PLAN

Origin/destination studies of motorists or Central Business District by-pass roads don't sound relevant to train travellers. But they are. The plan is bad in principle because it aims to improve the flow of traffic wanting to pass through the city. The better the traffic flow, the more cars. More people in cars means less on public transport. Less train travellers means less frequent trains. Less convenient service forces more people into their cars. Fares have to rise since there are fewer passengers. Jobs move to areas only accessible by car so motorists demand freeways to get there through the growing congestion. The city stagnates, declines. Recognise it? Only improving public transport reduces traffic jams. Freeways feed them.

A good C.B.D. traffic by-pass plan aims, not to get traffic from one side of the city to the other, but only to reduce the traffic on other city streets to improve the City environment.

This particular traffic plan is bad because it sacrifices the environment of a large part of the city to improve a little. And the main focus is on improving (through) traffic flows to the detriment of trams, pedestrians, trees and city shoppers.

Basically, for north-south traffic flows the trams will be removed from Spencer street and the trees from King Street. So you won't be able to walk across half-way. You'll have to cross seven traffic lanes in one hop(?), not to mention the loss of the tram service and the deteriorated street environment. King and - Spencer will operate as a one-way pair with a monster traffic jam in Flinders Lane where two-way flow starts again - (passing a 1000 car commuter parking station just approved by the Planning Appeals Board!)

East-West will have a similar one-way pair using Latrobe and Dudley/Franklin, so the trams will be pulled out of Latrobe Street with similar implications to pedestrians and loop station service.

Swanston Street will have all through traffic removed and a "transit mall" created. This is good. But the traffic engineering solution is madness. Instead of diverting the north bound traffic south of the Cultural Centre in South Melbourne, traffic will be made to turn left into Flinders Street. To cater for this volume of

turning cars, pedestrians crossing from Flinders St Station to Y & J's will have to take two cycles of the lights and will be hurded into a tiny island which will permit the left turning cars to pass behind. Imagine trying to crowd the peak-period rush onto this island. Cars first, people second is the hallmark of the plan. Clearways are proposed on the south side of Flinders St next to the stations. There is no concept of modal interchange. The taxis and buses are kept from the stations. At other corners in the city, right turn phases are installed at the lights to facilitate "circulating" traffic. The time for these phases is taken from that of pedestrians and trams, of course.

There is no tram pre-emption of traffic lights, no tram separation, no new widened safety zones with shelters, no bus lanes (except Swanston St). There are few new pedestrian areas. All these things might affect the (car) traffic flows.

We really have a plan to use the CBD as a through route for inter-suburban car-travel without the freeway costs or the compensation of adjoining land-owners. This strengthens the car-based suburban centres and weakens the CBD which is the heart of the public transport system.

Train travellers will inexorably lose service if these trends continue through the implementation of such plans. On arrival at the city train travellers will have a less attractive and useable place for pedestrians.

- IVAN POWELL

DOES THE USER PAY?

One of the terms or principles bandied around in recent years in relation to public transport is that of "The User Pays". Any effort or move to close down services of facilities or increase fares usually results in this phrase being brought to the fore and in reference being made to overseas facilities and experiences. Data available to the TTA however indicates quite clearly that Vicrail's cost recovery is little different from the world average. The chart on the opposite page graphically demonstrates Vicrail's cost recovery position amongst other countries of the world. Obviously proponents of the user pays principle for Vicrail want to see it as the world leader.

## PAT MINIHAN: A TRIBUTE

Improvements to the format, content, preparation and success of our Newsletter in the past year, are due to the splendid efforts of our Editor, Pat Minihan. He has given hours of his time and much effort to the compilation, editing and physical preparation of the paper.

Pat, a former President in 1979/80, has also been one of our dedicated Council Members. He was the Line Co-ordinator and spokesperson for matters concerning public transport on the Hurstbridge line and has been prominent in public and media campaigns on transport issues in that area.

Due to his recent promotion as Telecom's Chief Manager, Finance and Accounting for Victoria, Pat unfortunately is unable to devote the time and effort that the offices of Editor and Council Member require. We congratulate him on his promotion and wish him all success in his new position.

All members of the TTA will join with me in sincerely thanking Pat for his sterling services to the TTA and the marvellous job he has done as Editor.

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO FUTURE NEWSLETTERS

We are constantly looking for volunteers to assist in the newsletter tasks and if you would like to assist please contact the Secretary on [redacted]

If you would like to contribute an item to the Newsletter it should be addressed to The Editor, TTA Newsletter, 61 Leila Road, Ormond, 3115. Closing dates for all proposed issues during 1982 are:

| Cover date | Closing Date |
|------------|--------------|
| September  | August 8     |
| December   | November 1   |

The TTA reserves the right to edit, abridge or reject any material, however every effort will be made to publish items submitted.

HAVE YOU CHANGED YOUR ADDRESS?

If you have changed your address recently please advise any of the office bearers on the back page as soon as possible. Newsletters returned due to an incorrect address cause the Association to incur double postage costs in addition to the wastage in printing and preparation. Please help us to keep you informed of activities undertaken on your behalf.

## SPREADING THE WORD ON THE TTA

In the six years of our existence the TTA has earned a healthy respect, status and approval in all sections of the media and the community as the Voice of the Community on matters concerning public transport. The initials TTA themselves have become as well known as the abbreviations of many other longstanding groups.

We have achieved this status through the dedicated work of our Office Bearers both past and present and through a wide network of our information leaflets and Newsletters. A total of 1,200 newsletters per issue are now being distributed to our members, other community groups around Australia and to our sister national transport lobby groups in the U.S.A., Canada, U.K. and France. Since our first modest newsletter was issued in November 1976, we have printed and distributed over 16,000 copies to date.

Victorians would have heard of us for the first time most probably by receiving one of our leaflets normally distributed at rail stations, in trains or left in your letter box. Leaflets have been printed on specific issues such as protests against rail cuts, increases in fares, general information, as notices of our meetings or as Election leaflets. We have to date distributed over 280,000 leaflets! In addition we have had many advertisements in the city newspapers. The total cost of printing leaflets and newspaper advertisements has been \$7,800!

As a voluntary organisation we are limited in the advertising and distribution of leaflets because of lack of funds. In order to further spread the message of the TTA we require the efforts of each member to act as the mouthpiece or evangelist so that we can recruit more members and make our organisation a strong and more powerful lobby group for Victoria's public transport users.

- KEN McINTYRE

## NEW MEMBERS AND DONATIONS

We welcome the new members listed below who have joined the Association since the last list was published in our April Newsletter. To assist members in the recruitment of new members to the association the form on page 15, for membership subscription renewal or offers of assistance, has been expanded to include two tear off sections which may be given to friends.

|                    |             |
|--------------------|-------------|
| ABLITT, Mr J.      | Sandringham |
| ABLITT, Mr R.      | Sandringham |
| ANDREWS, Mr J.     | Sandringham |
| FITZGERALD, Ms M.  | Melbourne   |
| MARSHALL, Mr J.    | Ormond      |
| McNEILL, Mrs C.    | Sandringham |
| PARKER, Mr J.      | Ferry Creek |
| BARRETT, Mr J.     | E. St Kilda |
| CANNON, Ms K.      | Richmond    |
| DAVIDSON, Mr I.    | Balaclava   |
| JOHNSON, Ms K.     | Carlton     |
| MANNING, Mr R.     | Nunawading  |
| WISCHUSEN, P.      | Box Hill    |
| St. VAUGHAN, Ms B. | Melbourne   |

We also gratefully acknowledge donations from the following people:

|                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| MANNING, Mr R. | DONEGAN, Mr R. |
| PARKER, Mr J.  | HOWARD, Mr S.  |
| HART, Mrs I.   | ALLISON, Mr D. |
| WERNER, Mr D.  | DEASEY, Mrs O. |
| BOWD, Mr D.    |                |

## TGV BROCHURES

Members will have read of the new superfast French TGV train in recent issues of the Newsletter. By arrangement with Charles Sowerwine we have obtained some literature giving details and showing photographs of the new trains and these are available for 50 cents each or \$1 for a more elaborate layout. They will be available for sale at the Annual General Meeting or can be obtained from the Secretary.

## IS YOUR SUBSCRIPTION CURRENT?

Some members have not yet renewed their subscriptions. Adjacent to your name on the Newsletter wrapper the date to which your subscription is paid is noted. If it is expired please use the form on Page 15 to arrange renewal.

## LETTERS

Sir,

It is of interest to note the success that both NSW and South Australia are having in attracting patronage to their railways, with policies of improvements and low fares. We can only recall how the Healesville railway service was allowed to deteriorate, and its sudden closure following the "Lonie Report" without consultation with the communities that the train served.

I recently saw how well the State Transport Authority in Adelaide co-ordinates its trains, trams and buses. Two free bus services provide a frequent service around the city. Numerous other buses are painted in five special colour schemes to indicate the areas in which they operate. Special express trams also operate during peak hours.

Recently introduced fast diesel-powered Super Trains, with a top speed of 120km per hour, service the suburban rail system. The new type train has disc brakes and other advanced design features. A sign near the train door reads "Welcome Aboard". The press button doors open to a comfortable interior which features air-conditioning, carpeted floor, tinted windows and comfortable seats. A public address system advises passengers of intending stops throughout the journey. The train provides a very comfortable, quiet ride as it glides along the rails. The elderly and disabled are not forgotten. Special seats near the door are marked priority seats.

A journey by train from Adelaide to North Gawler is 42 kilometres. The fare is 90 cents return, even cheaper off peak. During off peak, pensioners travel free! South Australia has put into service these splendid advance design trains with more thought to providing a service than recovering costs.

Our State Government complained at the cost of running a train service to Healesville, even though they used a 50 year old Rail Motor. The advantage of a good rail service to Healesville is obvious. What better way could there be than by a Super Train with the increase in revenue it would bring? A low cost alternative is the 100 passenger Leyland Rail-Bus now in production in the U.K.

Arthur Payne  
Healesville

### THE CONTINUING SAGA OF THE SUBURBAN FLEET

I have written a number of items on this subject during the past two or three years and unfortunately many of the points drawn to attention have now come to bear on the long standing problem of upgrading the ever aging suburban train fleet. There have been two recent episodes in the saga involving some serious problems with first of the new fleet of GEC Silver Trains and industrial difficulties with the plan for refurbishment of the Blue fleet.

In our February issue we reported that the first four of the fleet of 50 GEC Silvers had been returned to their maker for the investigation and correction of problems. It has emerged that one of the problems has been the interaction between electric components employed in the train design and conventional electric motors and other devices. Steve Crabb the Minister for Transport has stated that one of the major faults affected the braking system. The recent reports have contained a classic indictment of the former Liberal Government and Vicrail management in that the contract for the new trains did not contain an adequate definition of performance levels. The revelations added to the design errors which prevent the trains from running on much of the suburban system give a clear indication of the poor standard of administration within VicRail which the new government has already moved to correct.

When the extent of the problems with the new trains emerged the Minister for Transport called for a review of the construction programme. This review involved options such as continuing the contract, reducing the number of trains and letting a new contract and scrapping the existing contract altogether and redesigning the trains. Whatever the option adopted the result for the travelling public is an extra delay in introduction of new trains and of course in the retention of the disintegrating red rattlers.

The result of the review announced recently is that subject to some changes that have resulted in improved performance the contract for the trains will not be scrapped and deliveries will continue. It is obvious however that the proof of the remedy will be in performance achieved. Our Secretary Ken McIntyre recently expressed the disgust that many Association members and commuters feel

at the whole affair through the following letter published in the daily press.

*The controversy surrounding the purchase of the Silver trains smacks of such unbelievable inefficiency and waste of public funds that a public enquiry should be held into the affair. Silver trains purchased in the 1970's were too long for the Hurstbridge line and Commuters on that line were condemned to travel in red rattlers as a consequence.*

*The 1981/82 versions are too wide to run on all lines and a sum of \$20 million is to be spent to realign tracks to accommodate them. At a cost \$4 million each, a further five new trains could have been purchased with this amount. Outside of a plot for a Keystone Cops movie, how can rail managers and designers explain their consistent approval of trains which are unsuited to existing standards and conditions? Was the previous Liberal Government slack in checking these aspects because one of its former Liberal Transport Ministers is on the management of COMENG which produces these trains?*

*The taxpayers and Users demand an enquiry into the entire mess and scandal.*

The long promised refurbished blue trains are yet to be seen although the first was apparently delivered about Mid May. A controversy has broken out with the Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Enginemen claiming that the trains were unsatisfactory. We have been waiting nearly two years for the first of 50 trains to be refurbished at a cost of \$1.5-2.00 million each, however AFULE State Secretary Jim Paterson says the refurbishment has shown up structural deterioration and had failed to remove all the asbestos from the trains. According to Mr Paterson "Its like taking a horse and cart and turning it into a car - these trains are 30 years of age; its a cosmetic job".

It is obvious that the long overdue retirement of the Red Rattlers is still some way ahead and the long road to the completion of the upgrading of the suburban fleet is still in front of us. The current state of the fleet is

difficult to determine as the figures appear to vary with every report however the approximate position is:

|                |       |
|----------------|-------|
| GEC Silver     | 4     |
| Hitachi Silver | 58    |
| Blue           | 55    |
| Red Rattlers   | 27    |
|                | <hr/> |
|                | 144   |

You may have read elsewhere in this issue that I have relinquished the position of Newsletter Editor for business reasons, however I hope to be able to find sufficient time to continue my monitoring of the suburban fleet. As information of interest to members comes to light I will continue the saga and provide relevant material to the new editor.

- PAT MINIHAN

### TTA NEWSLETTER READER SURVEY

As an interested member and reader of our Newsletter, you could help guide us on suggestions to improve the magazine. As a voluntary organisation with a basic subscription as low as \$3.00, we are limited in funds to implement improvements. We have increased the number of issues from one per quarter to one every two months. We would like to further increase the number of pages and/or number of

issues.

If we are to undertake any changes or improvements we will need more funds and may have to increase our subscription rates to meet costs. Could you please answer the following questionnaire and return it to the Secretary as soon as possible.

(Please tick relevant boxes)

1. How many members of your family read the Newsletter \_\_\_\_\_
2. If we expand, do you want
 

|                                |                          |     |                          |    |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|
| (a) More news                  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |
| (b) More feature articles      | <input type="checkbox"/> |     |                          |    |
| (c) More pictures/photos       | <input type="checkbox"/> |     |                          |    |
| (d) A Letters to Editor column | <input type="checkbox"/> |     |                          |    |
| (e) Other (specify)            | <input type="checkbox"/> |     |                          |    |
3. Is current news more important to you?
 

|                          |     |                          |    |
|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |
|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|
4. What size of the magazine would you like?
 

|              |                          |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| (a) Existing | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) Larger   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) Smaller  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
5. Do you wish to have more news on:
 

|                             |                          |     |                          |    |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|
| (a) The local scene         | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |
| (b) The international scene | <input type="checkbox"/> |     |                          |    |
| (c) Trams                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |     |                          |    |
| (d) Buses                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |     |                          |    |
| (e) Other (Specify)         | <input type="checkbox"/> |     |                          |    |
6. Would you pay more in subscriptions to meet costs of these changes?
 

|                          |     |                          |    |
|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |
|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|
7. By how much should the subscriptions be raised to meet these costs? \$ \_\_\_\_\_
8. Are you prepared to help in the preparation of the Newsletter by:
 

|                                     |                          |     |                          |    |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|
| (a) Contributing articles/material  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |
| (b) Helping in physical preparation | <input type="checkbox"/> |     |                          |    |
| (c) Distributing copies             | <input type="checkbox"/> |     |                          |    |
| (d) Other (specify)                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |     |                          |    |
9. Would you offer to:
 

|  |                          |     |                          |    |
|--|--------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|
| (a) Sell   | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No |
| (b) Distribute free spare copies to friends, neighbours, institutions, newspapers, clubs, etc. in your locality. | <input type="checkbox"/> |     |                          |    |
10. Any other suggestions?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your co-operation.

# PUBLIC TRANSPORT NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



## EMPLOYERS REIMBURSE WORKERS FARES IN FRANCE

Employers in France presently pay a transport supplement to all employees and a transport tax based on their total wage bill. The government has just decided to suppress the transport supplement in favour of a reimbursement of 40% of the cost of the weekly or monthly transport subscription. The monthly subscription is the 'orange card'.

The orange card was introduced in 1975 and enjoyed a phenomenal success. The card itself is an identity card with a photo to be used in conjunction with a monthly ticket; the user prints his card number on the ticket, thus preventing use by another person.

The ticket and the orange card are valid for all trips on buses, metro, trains, and private buses, within the zones for which purchased. The city of Paris constitutes Zone 1: this is an area in a rough circle of a radius of about 5 to 8 kilometers from Notre-Dame; 2½ million people live within this area. Zone 2 is the next concentric circle, including the innermost suburbs. The outermost zone, Zone 5, includes towns as far away as 60-70 kilometers; the whole area covered by the orange card has a total population of 12 million.

The monthly ticket for use with the orange card is sold for any two or more zones. The price is based on a rough equivalence with that of 50 metro tickets, or 25 return trips by metro, for the zone 1-2 ticket, which includes the same area as a metro ticket. The idea is to provide the card for roughly the same price as the ticket price for regular work trips. Originally the orange card was priced the same as 40 metro tickets, not 50 but it proved so popular that the relative price was increased.

Thus at present a commuter using the metro within Paris and the innermost suburbs would pay two francs per metro ticket, roughly A\$0.35, or 88 francs (about A\$15) in a month with 22 working days. The orange card for the same area, zones 1-2, is priced at 100 francs, so for 12 francs (A\$2) more the same user gets unlimited access to buses, metro, and trains in Paris and the innermost suburbs.

Prices for additional zones or different combinations of zones are based on the zone 1-2 price of 50 francs per zone with a sliding

scale to reduce cost to the outermost suburbs. The ticket for zones 1-5 costs only 200 francs (A\$34) for unlimited use of all transport throughout the Paris region, an area more than 100 kilometers across.

The following news item translated from *Le Monde* (Paris) of 13 May 1982 gives some insight to the history and current disposition of the employer participation schemes.

- CHARLES SOWERWINE

The R.A.T.P. (Paris Transport Authority) and public transport in the Paris region are on the agenda of the Council of Ministers this Wednesday, 12 May. First, and paradoxically, by virtue of their absence from the interim budget which was approved there: for the first time in many years, the State will not need to increase in the middle of the financial year the credits attributed in the budget to cover the deficit in the functioning of the R.A.T.P.

Second, because the Council will approve a bill modifying the way in which businesses participate in financing the costs of the trip between home and workplace for their employees: their contribution will be - if the Parliament accepts the bill - legally reserved for those who use public transport.

The transport supplement paid every employee, regardless of mode of transport used, installed in the Paris region by an Inter-ministerial Decree of 28 September 1948 (this supplement has been 23 francs (A\$4) per month since 30 January 1970), will be eliminated from 1st October 1982. On the other hand, from the same date, businesses in the Paris region however many zones it includes, or their weekly transport card. This rate of reimbursement will be increased to 50% on the 1st October 1983. The aim, in the long term, is to achieve 80% reimbursement, (and not 100%) because it is believed that an employee uses his orange card in part for trips not related to his work. For the country, the problem is under study, but, already, it appears that after the contribution of

businesses is greater than the true cost of the home/work trip.

(Outside Paris), the transport reimbursement which was created by a law of 12 July 1971, and which varies from 2% to 1% of the total wage limited to the wage ceiling of the Social Security, but which, for the present, applies only in conurbations of more than 100,000 inhabitants, will be extended to those of more than 50,000; but in the latter it will be limited to 0.5% of the total wage.

The Ministry of Transport affirms that this reform will not increase the costs incumbent on business, at least not in the early stages. In the Paris region, the real price of public transport (as opposed to that paid by the users) for trips between home and work was five thousand million francs in 1980 (about A\$1000 million). Business paid 80% of this, 3.1 thousand million francs in transport tax and 950 million in the transport reimbursement paid to employees. Now there are a million employees who buy the orange card and 350,000 who use a weekly transport

card. If one assumes a 10% increase in transport prices on 1st July 1982, the reimbursement of 40% of the price of the orange card and the weekly card would have cost, for a full year, 796 million francs. If one assumes that 50,000 car users switch to train, metro, or bus, and that 200,000 public transport users now paying by ticket switch to one of the cards, the cost for business would have been 950 million, roughly the equivalent of the transport supplement.

It is thus the users of private cars who, indirectly, losing their supplement, will finance the new advantages granted to those who use public transport. This is in fact the aim of the operation.

It remains true, however, that this reform will mean, for employers, the indexation of the transport supplement, which had been stable for more than ten years. All the more in that the Ministry of Transport does not hide its intention to increase the prices of Parisian public transport by 2 or 3 percentage points more than the consumer price index, in order to make them evolve at the same rate as household incomes.

## A BIG YEAR FOR VIA RAIL CANADA

More Canadians travelled by train in 1981 than in any previous period of VIA Rail Canada's five-year existence as custodian of the country's passenger rail services.

In its recently released annual report VIA states that more than eight million people travelled by train last year compared with 7.6 million in 1980; a 5.5 percent increase in ridership.

During the same period, passenger revenues rose to \$160.8 million from \$136.7 million in 1980. Revenue increases were attributed to a combination of basic rate increases and a jump in the number of passengers carried.

In his report to shareholders, Frank Roberts, VIA's Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer says that service adjustments implemented last November 15 have provided the Crown corporation with a realistic base for

development of future operations.

According to Roberts, service adjustments will be; 'more than offset by mid and long-term benefits to the majority of the travelling public.' He added:

"...VIA welcomes the renewed commitment of the Federal Government to improving passenger rail service in this country. As a result of the Minister of Transport's announcement of July 1981, VIA is assured of the funds necessary to improve service on major routes in Canada and increase productivity."

VIA recorded net income in 1981 of \$1.174 million compared to \$745,000 in 1980. Total revenues for the year were \$560.7 million including \$399.8 million in contract revenue from the Federal Government.

VIA RAIL CANADA'S BIG YEAR IN FIGURES

(000's except for employee data)

| Highlights:                 | 1981       | 1980       |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Financial results</b>    |            |            |
| Passenger revenue           | \$ 160,841 | \$ 136,704 |
| Total revenue               | 560,661    | 467,951    |
| Net income                  | 1,174      | 745        |
| Capital expenditures (net)  | 109,447    | 90,238     |
| <b>Volume</b>               |            |            |
| Total passengers carried    | 8,009      | 7,586      |
| Total passenger miles       | 1,936,226  | 1,928,509  |
| Car miles operated          | 100,231    | 101,994    |
| Average number of employees | 4,135      | 4,200      |

FRANCE LEADS EUROPE IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT SPENDING

President Mitterand's Government has made public transport a spearhead of its assault on the recession and unemployment. Under Giscard d'Estaing the funds allocated to transport were slightly reducing, down 0.6% in 1981 by comparison with 1980. But Mitterand's administration has proposed a thumping 19.6% increase in state aid for transport operating expenditure and investment in its 1982 Budget, up to a total of more than Fr40billion, or around 3.6billion. That will put France way out in front of all its neighbours in state spending on transport. By comparison, West Germany has budgeted only Dm11.9billion, or just under 2.8billion, for Federal support of transport in 1982.

True France's civil aviation industry gets the biggest slice of the new Socialist cake, but one of the 1982 budget's sharpest reversals of policy under Giscard d'Estaing is its treatment of urban and conurbation public transport. Under Mitterand's predecessor this section had its state support slashed by 20% in 1981. Mitterand's men have restored that cut and upped the figure by a further 10% to a total of Fr780million, or around 70million. This, of course, is supplementary to urban authorities' own investment in local transport equipment and infrastructure (in the latter case including, incidentally, contributions to the remodelling of main SNCF stations). Some 40% of state investment support is absorbed by Paris, principally for Metro extensions, and the latter

are the chief beneficiary of the provincial authorities' share; Marseille and Lyon are both busy on their Metro systems, Lille has just opened the first stretch of its idiosyncratic, fully automated line, the first in Europe to operate unmanned trains, and Nantes is set to start an LRT system.

The government has also taken action to relieve Users of the costs of public transport. A separate article on these actions by Dr Charles Sowerwine is included on page 12 of this issue.

In financial terms France's 1982 transport budget does not startlingly alter the road-rail balance. Roads still grab most money - 59% of the total - but their allocation is slightly less inflated by comparison with 1981 than the SNCF's, 14.1% as against 15%. But the distribution of road finance is an important first step down the new inter-urban transport road sketched by Mitterand's Ministers when they took office. While the SNCF has been bidden to start detailed engineering study of a second TGV, the TGV Atlantique, with completion as early as 1988 a possibility, autoroute building is severely curtailed. Only 96 miles will be commissioned this year, compared with 316 in 1981. Under Mitterand autoroute construction is to be confined to essential inter-connections of the already established base network; urban bypasses and improvement of the historic Route Nationale system are regarded as the priority.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION or OFFER OF ASSISTANCE

I wish to join the TTA/I wish to renew my subscription

|                        |                  |         |                          |
|------------------------|------------------|---------|--------------------------|
| NAME .....             | Ordinary Member  | \$3.00  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ADDRESS .....          | Donor Member     | \$10.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| .....Postcode.....     | Corporate Member | \$50.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Telephone - Home ..... | Donation \$..... |         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Business .....         |                  |         |                          |

I want to help with:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leaflet hand outs                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Research for newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Speaking at meetings                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Setting up stalls       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letters to press, politicians         | <input type="checkbox"/> Mailouts                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Signatures for petitions              | <input type="checkbox"/> Typing                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telephoning messages to other members | <input type="checkbox"/> Other.....              |

I can help  often  occasionally

POST TO:

The Secretary  
 Train Travellers Association  
 61 Liela Road  
 ORMOND 3163

Tear out the membership application forms below and pass them on to your friends.

TO: The Secretary,  
 Train Travellers Association  
 61 Liela Road  
 ORMOND 3163

Recommended By: .....

Please enrol me as a member of the TTA:

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

TELEPHONE: Home..... Business .....

TO: The Secretary,  
 Train Travellers Association  
 61 Liela Road  
 ORMOND 3163

Recommended By: .....

Please enrol me as a member of the TTA:

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

TELEPHONE: Home..... Business .....

## TTA Membership and Newsletter

The TTA Newsletter is published by and for members of the Train Travellers' Association.

The TTA is a voluntary, non-party political, non-profit organisation of train travellers and public transport users.

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

The membership includes regular issues of the Newsletter for the basic subscription of \$3 annually. Those who can afford to are requested to become Donor Members at \$10 per year or to make donations towards the costs of printing, postage, hire of halls for meetings, etc. All members have equal status and their category

of membership may be changed, if they wish, when subscriptions are renewed.

Regular TTA activities consist of monthly meetings of the TTA Council to which all members are invited. The Council meets on the first Wednesday of each month (except January) in the Masonic Club Premises, 164 Flinders Street, Melbourne at 5.30pm. Please enquire the location of the meeting room from Ground Floor reception and sign the visitors' book.

Other TTA functions are the preparation of briefs and submissions; liaison with VicRail managers through regular meetings; representations to the Premier and Transport Minister on suggestions, complaints, etc; media interviews; speeches at public meetings; articles and letters to the press; publishing and distribution of leaflets; etc.

Members are encouraged to contribute articles to the Newsletter and offer suggestions and ideas to the Council for consideration.

Office bearers elected for the year 1981/82 are:

|                          |                    |       |     |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-------|-----|
| <u>President:</u>        | Dr Douglas Sherman |       | a/h |
| <u>Secretary:</u>        | Ken McIntyre       |       | "   |
| <u>Vice-President:</u>   | Ivan Powell        |       | "   |
| <u>Treasurer:</u>        | David Bowd         |       | "   |
| <u>Public Relations:</u> | Patrick O'Connor   |       | "   |
| <u>Council Members:</u>  | John Alexopolous   |       | "   |
|                          | Pat Minihan        |       | "   |
|                          | Robin Vowels       |       | "   |
|                          | Rod Bryant         |       | "   |
|                          | Ria Smit           |       | "   |
|                          | Alex Boyne         |       | "   |
|                          | Margaret Panter    |       | "   |
|                          | Steve Howard       | (059) | "   |
|                          | Barry Gray         |       | "   |