

# TRANSIT

## NEWS AND VIEWS



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## ELECTION 92

### what's in store for Victoria's public transport ?

One can expect great interest in policy statements, even more so when it is known that there are stated to be significant differences between the alternatives. The public transport policies of the major parties certainly offer different directions and emphases. Despite their good points, and the fact that many of PTUA's arguments are being incorporated into policy, we still express some disappointment. Why?

#### Where is the Integrated Transport Plan?

In a nutshell, the biggest omission is that of a clear integrated transport plan. At a time when a profound commitment to every aspect of public transport is critical, not only for our environment and quality of life, but also for our economy (given the large and increasing community cost of road transport), one would expect a well-thought out plan that co-ordinated visionary economic, environmental and land-use policies from the major parties. Whilst some statements exist in the policies, the conflict of the broad with specific proposals begs the question:

**"Is there really a commitment to using public transport as a tool for maintaining Melbourne's oft-quoted title of the most livable city?"**

Labor promises a considerable list of network extensions. Admittedly there are growth areas that need servicing and the rail extensions to Craigieburn and Cranbourne are important priorities. But expensive infrastructure additions must be supported with simultaneous lifts in reliability and frequency if appropriate patronage increases are to occur. The Coalition is focussed on the methods of achieving lower costs (staff reductions, review of "uneconomic services") and risks sacrificing service standards in the name of efficiency. Some methods, such as putting ancillary services to tender, are sensible. But in focussing on costs, will the equations used include atmospheric pollution, traffic congestion and the cost of accidents?

The difference between theory and reality lies in what is not included in policy statements. Neither explicitly recognises district centres in transport planning. There are major infrastructure projects being developed outside the scope of the transport portfolio.

For example:

- ☐ the Major Projects Unit is managing the Airport Rapid Transit Link without any commitment to connection with the existing transport system.
- ☐ There are major expansions proposed for car-based stand-alone shopping centres whilst the central city is crying out for support. (The government's rejection of the National Mutual Chadstone relocation proposal is an example of the right action, but where is such a continued policy commitment expressed in transport planning?)
- ☐ Major roadworks are being proposed without proper consideration of public transport and demand management alternatives. What public transport improvements could be funded with the \$725 million that the Coalition is committed to provide for the Eastern freeway extension? Yet these roadworks will undermine public transport patronage.

The lack of connection between planning and transport decision making is again emphasised by an absence of comment on parking and road use costing, and cost recovery. Parking limitations and traffic restraint is necessary to have an impact upon our traffic problems. The Shadow Ministry even has separate Roads and Public Transport functions, which would give the bureaucracy a field day in preventing proper co-ordination!

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## OBITUARY

### Ern Bowd

One of Nature's gentlemen. A PTUA member of long standing; father of our long-serving Treasurer David Bowd; husband of Angela; all tireless workers for the PTUA from our early years. Fatally injured while shopping, by a van that had run out of control.

Our deepest sympathy to the Bowd family.

## Getting in Touch with PTUA...

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**Service Complaints  
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**Your Membership** David Bowd

**Newsletter** Daniel Neumann

All individuals' phone numbers are after hours

**Other Matters** PTUA office 650 7898

The office is staffed by volunteers at various times. [When the office is unattended, you may leave a message on the answering machine.] If you would like to volunteer (no minimum time, any date of the week), phone David Sauer on (AH).

## The President Writes...

### Who Runs Public Transport?

Whoever wins the State election in October, we can expect to see major changes to the way in which Victoria's public transport is run. The present government has signalled its intention to establish a "transport taskforce" controlled by the Premier, Treasurer and Transport Minister, to work on reducing the cost of running public transport, and to appoint an independent board of directors to run the PTC. The Liberal Party proposes to appoint a board of directors, reduce staffing levels and contract out some services. The Chief Executive of the PTC, Mr Ian Stoney, wants the PTC to become an independent corporation, free of political control.

The government and opposition proposals are equally inconsistent. No independent corporation would tolerate government interference in such matters as staffing levels, choice of vehicles and fare-collection methods, and contracting out services: these are matters it would expect to decide for itself. On the other hand, the PTC cannot be expected to operate as a commercial enterprise without an agreement by the government to fund the social obligations it imposes, such as concession fares and uneconomic services. The government must also fund the infrastructure improvements that are necessary if the PTC is to provide a first-class service. Finally, the government must implement complementary roads, parking and land-use policies. Public transport cannot be expected to achieve a high cost-recovery if it is undermined by an over-supply of roads and parking, or by poorly-sited developments.

If the government wants an independent, commercial PTC, it should limit its own involvement to setting the broad goals and strategies for public transport, providing the necessary resources and ensuring that effective mechanisms are in place to safeguard the public interest.

Whilst independence in the operation of public transport is to be welcomed, any attempt to remove transport planning from the political arena should be resisted. Planning is an essentially political process about the allocation of scarce resources among competing demands. Decisions about spending public money on public transport infrastructure, particularly in the new growth corridors on Melbourne's fringe, must be made by people accountable to the public. Of course the advice of the PTC should play an essential part in decision-making, but ultimately it is up to the community to decide how much public transport it wants and is prepared to pay for.

Ray Walford

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## STOP PRESS ON SANDRINGHAM LINE!

The latest performance data for the Sandringham line shows that in May this year, trips and revenue were up 27% and 33% respectively over May 1991; while for June the increases were 33% and 40%.

Well, hotdog! it just gets better and better! This result is remarkable given that there are still station-staff shortages along the line, e.g. in the Brighton section even evening-peak "down" trains don't get a red carpet and brass band at the station. However staff morale is way up high and that's a good thing.

We're still looking for volunteers to get active at the local level, e.g. set up a "Friends of [Local station]" to adopt one of the elegant Victorian-era stations, as has already been done by local residents near Balaclava and Ripponlea stations; or make contact with local welfare and business associations to generate support for the trains and local bus services. Please contact Peter Hill at the PTUA (phone 6507898, or write to PO Box 324, Market St, Melbourne 3000).

## AIRPORT LINK - PRESENT STATE OF PLAY

The project is being managed by the Government's Major Projects Unit, which held a consultation on Wed. 26th August with community groups and users. There remain four short-listed tenderers. Their proposals are:

- ☛ two heavy-rail alternatives, via the Broadmeadows or Sunshine lines;
- ☛ one "maglev" high-tech monorail; and
- ☛ a sophisticated bus (O-bahn), via the Freeway reservation and Western Bypass.

The tenderers must over the next six months develop detailed plans (at their own expense) before a final recommendation is made to Cabinet. The proposals will include the route alignment, costings, ticketing proposals, location of stations, city terminus, car-parking, frequency and running times. An environmental-effects statement process is to be undertaken by the Dept of Planning and Housing.

The link operator will be a private company which will:

- ☛ raise all capital;
- ☛ be responsible for the profitability of the line; and
- ☛ own and supply rolling stock.

Rent for the use of some of the Met's facilities would be paid under the heavy-rail option. A rail-freight role for the line is an option, and is an advantage of these proposals. The possibility of a future extension to Sunbury is also to be kept open.

The viability of the link is seen as being dependent on attracting not only airport users and staff, but also commuters from Melbourne's North-West. Existing and

potential Met clients would be pulled onto the private link, reducing revenue for the PTC. This is probably the most serious problem with the proposal. Currently Melbourne's public transport allows for cross-subsidisation between more and less profitable services. Allowing a private operator to take the profits from the airport link reduces the funds available to operate the rest of the network. We think this is a thoroughly bad idea.

PTUA prefers a City Loop turn-around as the city terminus or at worst, a Spencer St terminus. The attitude of the PTC will be critical in determining whether the Loop is used for this purpose. For public transport users, the Loop option is more attractive. It allows for convenient interchange between other public transport and the airport link. Use of the existing standard-gauge line (available as an express route) would prevent the use of the City Loop. Why hasn't use of the broad-gauge freight line parallel to the SG line been considered?

Proposals for a large carpark on the docks side of Spencer St Station, to service the airport link are disturbing. Encouraging city car parking is inconsistent with green solutions for Melbourne's traffic and pollution problems. Presumably parking will be cheaper to provide at the airport - most users would drive straight to the airport instead.

Major Projects envisage the ticketing system as fully integrated with the Met system, so that one ticket would take the user from the suburbs to the airport. Bulk users (commuters and airport staff) would be able to buy periodical or multi-use tickets at a considerable discount on the one-trip price. Two market-research surveys have been carried out to date and copies of these have been made available to the PTUA.

Nik Dow



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## PERFORMANCE AUDIT FOR 1991 BUS RATIONALISATION

Now that the first anniversary of the changes to most private sector metropolitan bus routes has just passed, it is timely to ask the PTC to appraise the results.

As most members recall, last year the PTC got agreement of sorts, under protest, from the Bus Proprietors Association to rationalise or just plain cut back essential services, mostly in the less affluent middle and outer suburbs. About \$11 million worth of services were cut, with the PTC promising to inject \$3M of new services into new suburbs.

The PTUA disagreed with the thrust of these cuts and worked to lessen their impact at the time. Now we want to see the results of these changes in terms of both patronage and cost-recovery figures.

Peter Hill

## Public Transport's Future (from page 1)

Some specific proposals are appropriate and well thought out. Others, such as the now bi-partisan commitment to establish a tram Museum, are less important to the user. Some parts of policies are not new. As *TNV* readers will know, night buses have been on the PTC's agenda all year on PTUA's initiative. Extensions have been promised before but take a long time to materialise - sometimes the proposals disappear until the next election! The Spring Street tram loop may be useful for tourists, but doesn't deserve priority over many other capital projects.

### Staffing

The coalition indicate staff reductions are necessary. Major targets will be tram conductors, transit police and rail platform staff. The areas and method of staff reductions are of concern to PTUA. We believe that safety and revenue protection must be the key factors in determining the numbers and positions of staff required. Both unions and government must understand that industrial unrest over redeployment of staff into more productive and service-oriented tasks can cause long-term damage to patronage, as evidenced in the MetTicket dispute. Increasing revenue through increasing patronage should be the objectives of both groups.

The Labor policy allows for staff reductions to continue, but remains committed to conductors and the transit patrol. Whilst this is preferable for the user, Labor's past failure to act to obtain sufficient work practice reforms and productivity gains leaves its ability to improve financial performance to the levels necessary for the balance of its programs to be achieved under question.

### Ticketing

The introduction of automated ticketing could bring Melbourne's fare collection into the modern world. Both parties indicate movement in this direction, but do not state comprehensive strategies. Labor does not indicate the type of automation proposed, whilst the Coalition suggests placing ticket vending machines on trams and stations. Vending machines are useless without staff presence to prevent vandalism, and unlike automatic validation machines, will not provide the passenger boardings data necessary for proper service planning.

### Safety

A Coalition government plans to replace the transit police with members of the Police force. Adequate strength of numbers and sensitivity in handling users are requisites for the success of this policy. There will always be concerns that since police have competing demands for their services, a reduced presence on the Met will result. Nothing can match staff presence in providing the feeling of safety necessary to encourage users onto the system, particularly at off-peak times where patronage increase is so desperately needed to achieve increased cost recovery. So similarly, Labor's promise of increased video monitoring (as part of their stated priority for safety through staff presence) should be utilised so that staff saved at large stations can be redeployed to service currently unstaffed stations.

## PTUA, the election and You

Given the policies announced, it is more important than ever to highlight the PTUA's vision for public transport. We have sent a questionnaire to all candidates in the state, seeking answers to important questions and seeking opinions on fundamental issues. The results of this survey will be released through the major media, and local papers in respect of local candidates.

You can ensure that the message of community support for a strong & reliable public transport system is heard and is effective by:

1. talking to your local candidate (collecting the survey if there has not yet been a response); and
2. assisting with the compilation of results in PTUA's office.

Please phone 650 7898 (leave your name & number if phone is unattended), and help us give public transport the election profile it deserves.

### Structure

Both Coalition & Labor claim to want an independent PTC, yet both are prepared to dictate details such as free city travel, staffing arrangement, routes and extensions. Changing the PTC structure and funding is an important factor in enabling it to improve efficiency, but the delineation of independence must be clear. (Refer to the President's comments on page 2). Wouldn't it be good if those blank areas on the comparison table were filled in with "accountable PTC management to determine methods of achieving agreed target X".

Individual independent candidates have not yet spoken loudly about public transport to our current knowledge. However many responses to the PTUA survey have indicated policies broadly similar to ours.

Whilst there may appear to be some sharp differences in policy, particularly approach, the results that we see in the immediate future may not be as great as the policies suggest. Decisions taken under Labor, such as the acquisition of one-man operated Sprinter trains for country services, will provide very welcome improvements. Policy goals and rhetoric must climb hurdles after October 3rd. Labor must fund what amounts to a considerable "wish list" and will face pressure to improve returns on funds invested. The Coalition will struggle to achieve instant workforce efficiencies without a consultative approach, and risks sacrificing service standards in the name of efficiency if it acts hastily and without sufficient forethought.

It is good to see some of our objectives reflected in these policy documents - and congratulations to the parties for that. We will continue to offer our ideas, and work harder to convince the policy makers to spell out the specifics of integrated planning at the top of their lists!

# KEY POLICY SUMMARY

|  | PTUA   | Labor  | Coalition  |
|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Integrated Planning</b>   | Transport planning to cover all modes. 20% travel target for public transport. Cost recovery of road & public transport to be compared in decision making. Land use decisions to include public transport factors, including cost recovery from developers   | Policy claims integration, increased share of trips for public transport & reduced traffic congestion as objectives  | Policy does not refer to coordination of urban planning & roads with public transport<br>Public transport & roads portfolios are split<br><br>Commitment to Eastern freeway extension  |
| <b>Service Standards</b><br><i>Frequency</i>   | Set minimum frequencies of 5, 10 & 20 minutes depending on distance covered  | 60 new or more frequent bus services across state  | Frequencies to be reviewed against demand  |
| <b>Safety</b><br><i>Security</i><br><i>Cleanliness</i>   | Provide staffed stations, fully roving guards on trains, improve patronage to promote safety in numbers  | 42 stations to be upgraded (closed waiting areas & video monitoring)<br>Maintenance of safety & security deemed major priority<br>100 new school bus services to avoid students standing                   | Unspecified anti-vandalism & graffiti programs.<br><br>Transit Patrol abolished, replaced with increased police presence   |
| <b>Reliability</b><br><br><i>Coordination</i><br><br><i>Range of Operating Times</i>                             | Improve work practices, campaign against vandalism & provide tram & bus priority to reduce conflict with other traffic.<br>Focus bus routes on rail stations & match timetables, and hours of operation of linking transport modes<br>Increase off-peak hours/ frequency<br>Introduction of all night bus service  | <br><br><br>Introduction of all night bus service  | Bus priority measures to speed up bus operations in congested areas<br><br><br>Introduction of all night bus service   |
| <b>Extent of service</b>   | Expand rail catchment to growth areas such as Cranbourne, Craigieburn, Melton and link trip attractors to existing network.  | Extension of electric rail network by 2000 to Cranbourne Craigieburn Sth Morang Sunbury & Baxter<br>Extend tram network to Knox, Sth Morang & Box Hill<br>Commitment to maintaining country services       | City loop tram via Spring St.<br>Other extensions dependent upon economic performance<br><br>Commitment to maintaining "acceptable" country services   |
| <b>Economic Efficiency</b><br><br><i>Fare collection</i><br><br><i>Fare levels</i><br><br><i>Staffing Levels</i> | Improve cost recovery through patronage increase & better service - especially off-peak travel. Efficiency measures available that will not compromise service levels. Tickets available at all stations & on board buses and trams<br><br>Four-zone fare system. Off-peak & family tickets. Fare increases to be kept at or below the CPI<br><br>Consistent with need to maintain safety, revenue protection and service standards. | <br><br>Automatic ticketing machines to support conductors & platform staff<br><br><br>Continuing staff reduction and reform of work practices through enterprise bargaining, maintaining industrial peace | Reduction in losses by tackling inefficiencies is major priority<br>Contracting out to private sector of many support functions. Met buses sold to private operators.<br><br>Vending machines on trams & station platforms, most conductors phased out within 4 years<br><br>Fares to be set by PTC on economic & social justice grounds. Free city tram travel<br><br>Staff numbers to be significantly cut |
| <b>Framework</b>   | CSO's (eg. services, concession fares) set & funded by government. Delineation of responsibilities of PTC and government to be clear.  | PTC will be 'corporatised' with a commercial Board. CSO's to be defined & funded   | Independent board to run PTC on commercial lines. Annual plan (incl. CSO's) to be submitted annually for govt approval   |

This table summarises the issues we believe are vital to the future of public transport. The full policy documents are available to members in the PTUA office.



## A Roof Over Your Head (And Little Else)

Members will by now have seen quite a few of the new bus and tram shelters which are being installed all over Melbourne, at (apparently) no expense to the PTC. They represent a classic instance of the way things end up only half-right when the users' needs are not properly thought about.

What sort of protection against Melbourne's winter winds, for instance, does a two-sided structure give? Why don't they have three sides or even three-and-a-half? It would have been so easy to design and assemble. Why are so many of them installed with the opaque (advertising) side between any user and the arriving bus- or tram-driver, so that neither can see the other? Having the advertisements on the departure side of a transparent structure surely wouldn't lessen their effectiveness; having the ads in the way isn't going to endear people to the advertised products.

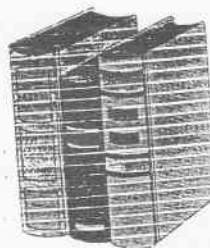
The shelters don't do anything for the continuing problem of tram 'safety zones' either. If you aren't on the safety zone (where there is no shelter) when the tram arrives, bad luck: the driver probably won't see you, and may not stop for you even if (s)he does; and of course, as it's a safety zone stop, traffic won't stop to let you reach the tram. A better idea might be to do away with safety zones altogether in favour of tram-activated pedestrian lights which stop the traffic between the tram and the kerb, a system now operating - and being extended - in the German cities of Bochum-Gelsenkirchen (Ruhr region).

Yes, the new shelters look clean and modern (at the moment); yes, it is excellent that new shelters could be provided at no extra cost through what is essentially a form of privatisation. But as an example of what such privatisation can do, or of the consultative procedures of the PTC, or even of their understanding of passengers' needs, they will have all the impact of half an umbrella.

Daniel Neumann

## Welcome to New Members:

Mr R Appleton, *Ringwood*; Ms J Blake, *Canterbury*; Mr H Blatman, *Middle Park*; Mr C.J. Brownbill, *Camberwell*; Ms D Clark, *St Kilda West*; Mr C.E. Day, *East Hawthorn*; Mr P Duggan & Family, *Ashburton*; Mr G.E. Farr, *Nunawading*; M Finger, *Belgrave*; Dr J Hajek, *Avondale Heights*; Mrs E.K.S.Hill, *Hampton*; Mr C.B. Jeffery & Family, *Dandenong North*; Ms A.C. King, *North Carlton*; Ms C Marple, *Altona*; Ms C Ryan, *Burwood East*; Ms R.C. Rymer, *Montmorency*; Mr T.S. Serong, *Surrey Hills*; Mr S Tyrell, *Wishart, Qld*; Mr G.E. Uphill, *Mt Waverley*; Mrs E Weeks, *Benileigh*; Mrs M White, *Middle Brighton*; Ms J Worrall, *Millgrove*.



## BOOK REVIEW

Title: *Winning Back the Cities*. Authors: Peter Newman and Jeff Kenworthy with Les Robinson. Publishers: Australian Consumers' Association and Pluto Press; ACA, 57 Carrington Road Marrickville NSW 2204; Pluto Press, PO Box 199 Leichhardt NSW 2040. Cost: \$10.95.

If you intend reading only one book on transport and the urban problem this year, then this is the one for you. It contains 49 pages packed with the distilled wisdom of Peter Newman and Jeff Kenworthy, Perth's now world famous transport gurus. Introductory chapters deal logically with 'The Crisis of the City' and 'How Car Use Defines a City' - the latter containing the famous graph of petrol consumption plotted against urban density. This shows the intermediate position of Australian cities situated between American and European cities, and reminds us that we do have a choice: "to follow the American example of suburban sprawl and high energy use, or ... plan for higher-density European-style cities."

This is followed by their three-pronged 'integrated solution': \*Traffic Calming \*Light Rail \*Urban Villages. Each of these has its own chapter elaborating the theme ideas. The final chapter evokes a vision of The Good City - "a place of exuberance and exaltation of the human spirit, a place for celebration and public 'happenings', for rich and easy encounter, for relaxation and enjoyment ... not simply functional and utilitarian." A concluding section contains several case studies drawn from their experience around the world, associated with the three themes of traffic calming, light rail and urban villages.

You should read this book because it provides well documented and well illustrated examples of Newman and Kenworthy's approach to solving the urban problem. It well portrays the issues facing us as we approach the twenty-first century and become increasingly forced to confront previous urban planning mistakes. It provides a clear direction towards a more sustainable urban form; in Melbourne we are fortunate in that we have the basis of an effective public transport system, around which the city can be re-created. In conclusion this book is relevant, appropriate to our needs today, is concise, easy to read, and provides a clear approach.

Copies are available from the PTUA office @ \$10 each.

Wayne R. Burt ( for the Education Committee)

*Transit News and Views welcomes material submitted for publication. It should be noted that where articles and letters are attributed to authors, the views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Public Transport Users' Association.*

## Railway Robbery?

Four years ago it cost 38 cents to post a letter. Now, it's 45 cents and the Prices Surveillance Authority is concerned, because the 18% increase is well above the inflation rate. However, if the PTC's Norman Walker is correct (*Transit News & Views*, July, p.7) the PSA should be on the backs of train suppliers.

In 1988 a "Comeng" train cost \$7.3M (*Upfield Corridor Public Transport Study: Technical Appendices*, Mar. 89, p.4) but now, apparently, the price is \$14M. I can't think of many other items whose price has jumped 92% in less than four years!

If train costs increased at the same rate as postage - let alone the CPI - a new single-deck train should cost less than \$9M. This is \$1.5M per carriage, or \$15,735 per seat, compared with \$21,740 per seat for a double-deck train. Double-deckers cost 38% more per seat!

Mr Walker did not give reasons for his claim that more trains will be needed this decade if patronage increases. Readers may recall (*Transit N & V*, April) that Toronto carries three times as many rail passengers as Melbourne with a similar number of trains. Confirmation - if it was needed - that Melbourne uses its train fleet very inefficiently comes from the following data, from the latest *Network - Railways of Australia Quarterly* (Vol. 29, No.3, p.31: thanks, John McPherson!):

| City      | Average kms run annually by each electric train |
|-----------|---|
| Brisbane  | 125,000   |
| Sydney    | 110,000   |
| Melbourne | 70,000  |

How can the PTC justify spending millions preparing for double-deck trains we probably don't even need, when problems like this are not being addressed?

Of course it would be great fun to buy some brand new, hi-tech trains for Melbourne; just as most people would find it a real hoot to trade their Holdens in for new Rolls-Royces. However, the better view in both cases is that the new toy is not necessary - and the purchaser couldn't afford it anyway!

Paul Mees

## Craigieburn Public Transport Initiatives

Congratulations to the Craigieburn Public Transport Action Group, which had its first meeting on Wednesday, 19th August, and is already making its mark on the area's public transport. A preliminary community meeting on the 11th Aug. was attended by a PTC representative who gave out copies of the June 1992 Public Transport Map of Melbourne - which, as someone at the meeting noticed, didn't feature Craigieburn at all!

Craigieburn, 26 km north of Melbourne, has a high proportion of young families, who are particularly disadvantaged by its poor public transport. Pierina Morano, Community Development Worker at Craigieburn Family Services, writes: "The mother who is at home on a day to day basis with her children is basically 'stuck' in Craigieburn. If she was to venture a trip to Broadmeadows it may mean negotiating children and prams over unmade footpaths to reach the bus stop. Imagine managing the children (because child-care is expensive and limited too in Craigieburn) the shopping and herself on the bus! To make matters worse she requires an expensive zone one and two ticket, an all day ticket at that, because the three hour ticket will run out before she has anything done."

Objectives identified by the new Action Group include: electrification of the Upfield line to Craigieburn; bus services to various district shopping centres; 7-day public transport to and within Craigieburn; and late-night public transport services. The Action Group has already taken steps towards the last-named item: on its own initiative it has arranged with Moreland Bus Lines P/L to operate a trial late-night shuttle bus service from Broadmeadows railway station on Friday and Saturday nights. Information and users' views about the operation will be presented to the PTC.

In addition, the Craigieburn Public Transport Action Group intends to make a response to the Shire of Bulla's draft Craigieburn Strategy Plan. If any PTUA member can assist the activities of this energetic group with information, advice, or useful contact names, please get in touch with Ms Morano c/o Craigieburn Family Services, 13 Dianne Avenue, Craigieburn 3064 (Ph. 305 5100). Please get in touch too, if you live in the area and have not filled out one of their survey forms.

### AVAILABLE FROM THE PTUA OFFICE:-

- \* GREENING MELBOURNE WITH PUBLIC TRANSPORT \$9.95 (\$8.95 to members)
- \* MOVING MELBOURNE (by Newman & Kenworthy for the Inner Metropolitan Regional Association) \$20.00
- \* TRAFFIC CALMING (Citizens Against Route 20, Brisbane) \$12.00
- \* WINNING BACK THE CITIES (Newman & Kenworthy, see review in this issue) \$10.00
- \* "SAVE PUBLIC TRANSPORT" T-SHIRTS, Sizes from S to XL, \$15.00. Design by Kaz Cooke, guaranteed to keep you nice.
- \* PTUA STICKERS for your briefcase, fridge, or car. Two designs:- "CARBON TAX FOR CARS" and "MY OTHER CAR IS THE MET". \$1.50 each (\$1.00 to members).

## LIGHT RAIL IN MELBOURNE AND THE WORLD - THE SUPERTRAM VISION

What is light rail? Light rail is the 'current buzzword of urban transport planning', according to Tim Morton, architect of several light rail schemes (1) - including an extensive and ambitious proposal for South London - and Australian transport guru Peter Newman who advocates the idea for Australia, for example in Canberra. In Melbourne we are currently uncertain of what actually is light rail, and what it can achieve. This is not too surprising because there are almost as many definitions of light rail as there are experts willing to attempt a definition.

A thoughtful approach has been suggested by Peter Kompfner, identifying a 'definition-by-example' which uses three key characteristics which enable light rail to be distinguished from other system types: a) class of right-of-way (ROW) and station type; b) type of operation and service; c) type of vehicle, power supply and other technology.

The right-of-way may be distinguished as follows: Class A: completely segregated; Class B: partially segregated, but intersecting or sharing a roadway with other vehicles; Class C: completely shared with other traffic. Kompfner sees this distinction as 'the most important for determining the character of a mode of transport.' Most of the world's light rail systems use a class B right-of-way involving partial segregation, although major intersections may have tunnelled or overpass sections.

The second major characteristic, type of operation and service, says Kompfner, is determined primarily by right-of-way, and a class B ROW permits greater coverage and penetration of residential areas, offering a shorter access time to passengers. A typical average operating speed would be about 25 km/h with a line capacity of about 10 000 passengers per hour per direction. Stations are usually simple structures, cheap to build, and situated about 600 m to 800 m apart. If the system is to be successful it must be well-integrated with other transport forms, and so well-situated and well-designed interchanges are essential. These must be able to bring pedestrians, bus and rail passengers, and even car passengers together with the system - such as is found with Toronto's Scarborough Light Rail Transit. Short light rail headway times mean that timetabled transfers are not required between bus and light rail, but comfortable interchanges with shelters, public toilets, telephones and possibly a kiosk are essential to overcome passenger dislike for changing mode. Many interchanges can be located at district centres and this enables several trip purposes to be combined in one journey.

The third characteristic of a light rail system is the vehicle type. State-of-the-art vehicles have low-floor loading for rapid boarding and alighting, and improved access for the physically disabled. Grenoble, in the French Alps, provides an excellent example of such vehicles, and these show up a major deficiency of the PTC's B-Class articulated tram. Absolute priority for on-street running is recommended to allow the quickest city-wide travel. Current best practice worldwide suggests one-person operation with simplified, usually automated, ticketing systems.

### Light Rail Success in North America and Europe

The attraction of a light rail system lies in the fact that vehicles, stations, track, track-bed and alignments are located or engineered to less stringent standards than are required for conventional heavy rail. This enables construction costs to be kept lower than those for heavy rail and in large part explains why light rail has found such favour among North American transport authorities, where nineteen such systems have been built or extended since 1978(3). Many tram systems in Europe, as in Melbourne, were not destroyed following the rapid growth of road traffic after World War Two and many of these have been upgraded to light rail standard to fill the intermediate capacity market niche which light rail ably fills.

From an environmental viewpoint light rail systems are most attractive since they can be 'fitted into existing urban topography and transport corridors' (Morton) or, as I like to describe it, they 'fit snugly into the streetscape'. Since 1978 thirty-nine new urban light rail systems have been constructed worldwide, including London's Dockland Railway. A further twelve systems are currently being built while another thirteen have been authorised and over forty are on the drawing board(4).

With this clarification, I think that Morton's definition can now clearly explain the light rail concept. He states: 'Light rail may be defined as a cheap and simple railway system designed to carry intermediate levels of passenger flow and capable of being integrated into the urban environment.'(5).

### Revealing the Success of Light Rail

Light rail has produced a tram renaissance in the world's major cities because freeway building can never solve a city's traffic problems; to which Los Angeles, with its new light rail system provides dramatic testimony. The major advantages of these new systems are their flexibility, which includes their ability to penetrate city centres by on-street running, in making use of abandoned suburban rail routes and freeway median strips, and their low cost compared to conventional heavy rail. The success of such systems is a result of on-street absolute priority which enables fast schedules and provides a high-quality public transport system with a profile of quality and permanence, something buses are unable to achieve.

### Light Rail in Melbourne

The history of light rail in Melbourne is unfortunately associated with the demise of the St Kilda and Port Melbourne railway branch lines, which were converted to light rail operation in 1988. This involved the deplorable closure of heritage bluestone stations along the route, a deed which must be rectified, and the continuing controversy surrounding the rerouting of both services away from Flinders Street station. Furthermore, short-sighted efforts were made to convert the Upfield Line to light rail; efforts which were successfully resisted by the PTUA and our allies. It is this background with which light rail in Melbourne must contend.



Melbourne has a de facto north-south light rail route which the 96 and 111 route 'trams' follow along Spencer Street, Bourke Street and Nicholson Street. This was intended 'to form a comprehensive light rail network' (7), which would 'run, in large part on reserved rights-of-way in the centre of roads' and 'provide for radial movements, particularly to the central city, in those corridors not serviced by trains, with a standard of comfort and journey speed comparable to that of trains' I believe that this vision must now be given shape; something which we in the PTUA are well placed to do. We must identify those corridors which require genuine segregated light rail routes. This will involve: the separation and upgraded conversion of some existing tram routes, following European experience (such as the Bundoora tram); the insertion of new lines along road median strips (such as the 75 tram extension to Knox, which would also require an upgrade in its inner-city section, and a new route from

- (1) Morton, T. (1987) "The Concept of Light Rail", London Centre for Transport Planning, Light Rail Seminar, Wed 7 October 1987, London, UK. Page 1.
- (2) Kompfner, P. (1979) "Notes on light rail transit in Great Britain", Transport and Road Research Laboratory, UK. Supplementary Report 482. Pages 6-7.
- (3) Light Rail Review 3 (1991) World List - Urban Tramways & Light Rail Systems 1992, pp76-79. Light Rail Transit Association, Albany House, Petty France, London SW1H 9EA, England, UK.
- (4) *ibid*, pp76-79.
- (5) Morton, T. (1987) See reference (1) above, p1.
- (6) Bayman, R.E. (1988) "Docklands Light Railway - A New Approach", Institution of Mechanical Engineers, UK. Ref: C472/88. Page 22.
- (7) MetPlan (1988) "Metropolitan Public Transport



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## A QUESTION OF WHAT'S FARE

### FARE ZONES

In the Insert to the July '92 edition of *Transit N & V*, members were invited to contact me about inequitable zone boundaries. Although only one member did so, a growing awareness of the inadequacy of the existing fare and ticketing system has been evident from recent discussions at Council meetings and general meetings.

The present system obviously discriminates against those who live just outside a zone boundary. It is even worse for someone (as in the case of the member who phoned me) who regularly has to make short journeys across a zone boundary and thus incurs a minimum fare of \$3.20 for only a few kilometres of travel.

One suggestion for alleviating the problem has been the creation of a fourth (inner) zone. However, the minor improvement arising from smaller fare increments would be at the expense of greater complexity: there would be 10 combinations of zones compared with the present 6 (or 15 zone combinations if a 5-zone system were considered).

Under the present fare regime, some users could pay as little as 1c per km of travel while others (like the example above) might be paying over \$1 per km - but obviously such an impost will actually be paid only by those without access to a car, which typically costs about 20c/km to run (excluding standing charges).

Apart from these manifest inequities, other inadequacies of the present system are that it provides little insight into travel patterns and passenger loadings on various services, does not seriously address the need for peak, shoulder and off-peak fare differentiation, is very labour-intensive, and is inconvenient for users, especially those who don't travel often enough to need a long-term periodical ticket.

The obvious solution would be a fare system which charges a basic rate per kilometre, varied according to the time of day and with discounts for regular users. Where concessional fares are available the concessions should be funded outside the

public transport budget - or at least shown as an external cost in the PTC accounts.

The appropriate technology has been available for some years, and various automated systems have been proved in Australia and abroad. It is possible in this day and age to introduce a fare-payment system which is convenient and economical for all users, and efficient for the providers, enabling the large number of staff now responsible mainly for ticket selling and checking to be redeployed into more productive, satisfying and service-oriented jobs - thus markedly improving service quality, as is certainly needed.

David Bowd

### FAMILY FARES

More than two months ago we were assured that the abolition of free family weekend travel on periodical tickets would quickly be compensated by the institution of cheap family tickets. Well, where are they?

A call to the Met's information number has revealed that family tickets will not be available until October 10th. Why has it taken so long? Moreover, they won't be the good value we might have expected. A single-zone family ticket will cost \$7.00 and a Zone 1-2-3 ticket will cost \$12.00, for up to 2 adults and 4 children.

Now the whole point of cheap family travel at weekends is that public transport is fairly empty then, and (apart from the actual costs of issuing the tickets) any revenue at all is extra revenue for the system. So the cost of family travel should be made as cheap as practicable, in order to attract patronage and encourage the public transport habit.

With the operating costs (which are all the average driver tends to consider) of a family car at about 20c/km, these fares are simply not competitive.

Daniel Neumann

### *Is This Your Newsletter ?*

If you have bought or borrowed this newsletter and are not a PTUA member, you may join by sending a subscription cheque for \$10 per annum (\$20 for a household, \$5 concession rate). to The Treasurer, PTUA, PO Box 324 Market Street, Melbourne 3000.

## \*\*\* TRANSPORT FAIR AT MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY'S 'DISCOVERY DAY' \*\*\*

In spite of the cold, wet weather on Sunday 23rd August, the University's Transport Research Centre mounted what proved to be a very successful 'Transport Fair' in a marquee on the Union Lawn. Inside the marquee were a number of booths where we were to be found, next to the RACV, exhibiting our 'Greening Melbourne' and 'Eastern Corridor' display boards, promoting our membership and selling our merchandise - books, t-shirts, audio tapes and our new stickers.

The street theatre group Vox Bandicoot put on several performances promoting car-pooling, and Bicycle Victoria launched its 'Bike to Work' campaign accompanied by a timely celebratory free lunch! The highlight of the day was a 'Transport Hypothetical', along the lines of those presented by Geoffrey Robertson, hosted by Rod (Captain Snooze) Quantock, who persisted admirably in tackling the difficult front-man role. Among the panel of twelve were Tricia Caswell, ACF's new Director, who worked hard to familiarise herself with transport issues; Ian Stoney (PTC Chief Executive) who bravely sought to elaborate his vision of an independent, corporatised PTC, free from day-to-day political intervention, with effective budgetary control of the system including a clearly-defined community service obligation (CSO) subsidy.

The liveliest speaker was John Whitelegg, Chairman of Transport 2000 International, and familiar to PTUA members of several years standing, as the keynote speaker in our 1989 'Public Transport in Crisis' conference. His message was unequivocal: the only way to stop the city from its ultimate demise, compromising the health of us all, choking on a deadly cocktail of hydrocarbon and combustion-derived pollutants, is to stop the flow of cars into city centres, and to build on the current strengths of public transport. John was largely supported by Krystyna Lipcer from the CCV; Tim Rees, Melbourne City Council's Traffic Management Director; Duncan Ironmonger (Director of Melbourne University's Household Research Dept); and Trish Caswell herself.

Putting the conventional cars-first view were John Sanderson (RACV's Assistant General Manager), albeit in rather muted mood; and the TRC's low-profile Director, Tony Richardson; with the bicycle lobby ably represented by Bicycle Victoria's Charlie Farren in persuasive voice.

Somewhat bemused by the proceedings was ABC Radio 3LO's presenter of 'Australia Tonight', Bev O'Connor, though we should expect some thoughtful transport debate on her program in future.

Wayne Burt

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### LIAISON COMMITTEE REPORTS:-

# The "Nightrider" all-night buses are still awaiting funding.

# The PTC's Kerri Carr announced the following reductions in reported crime figures on the Met:-

- \*Crimes against persons: 42% in 2 years
- \*Vehicle thefts from stations: 65% in 1 year
- \*Bicycle thefts from stations: 70% in 1 year
- \*Trains cancelled due to vandalism: 90% in 2 years

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### LOST ADDRESSES

We do not have current addresses for the following members. If anyone is able to help us get back in touch, please contact the Membership Officer, David Bowd, via the PTUA office.



### CCV RAFFLE

The PTUA is joining in another Conservation Council of Victoria Raffle.

This time the prizes include five top-of-the-range bicycles.

**We have pre-booked to sell 1000 tickets (available in books of 20) from the start of September 'til the end of October, with the option to sell more if before a certain date in October.**

Tickets are priced at \$2 each, and the PTUA will receive \$1 commission for each ticket sold.

We had a great success in selling the last raffle tickets. Let's all pitch in to sell even more this time and strengthen your PTUA's bank account!

Yes, that's right, your PTUA needs you to sell tickets! Could interested members contact **Peter Hill** in writing at the **PTUA address**, or by phone on **(03) 650 7898**, to place orders for books of tickets now.

## Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 28th  
October 1992

Details on insert to  
newsletter

*Cartoon produced by Les Robinson for the Wolli Creek Preservation Society, Sydney 1991  
Our intrepid investigator continues to dig into the whys and wherefores of road transport.....*

