



PTUA 25th Anniversary & Annual General Meeting

The Public Transport Users Association is to hold its Annual General Meeting and 25th Anniversary function next month. It will be on Thursday November 15th at the Duke of Kent Hotel, 293 Latrobe St, Melbourne. The meeting will start at 7pm.

The venue is near the intersection of Elizabeth and Latrobe Streets and near Melbourne Central Station. The meeting will mark 25 years of the PTUA as Victoria's pre-eminent public transport advocacy organisation. There will be a guest speaker. Dinner and drinks will be available after the meeting.

Members wishing to attend should contact the PTUA office by November 2 to RSVP.

The nomination form for PTUA committee members is on the back of this newsletter.

Swanston Street

The Public Transport Users Association has restated its opposition to cars in Swanston Walk and has called for the street to be restored to a full-time mall.

Swanston Walk was created in 1992. The street became more people-friendly and attracted considerable commercial investment. What was formerly the traffic sewer of Melbourne became its vibrant heart with wide footpaths and healthy trees.

The PTUA considers that Swanston Walk should be made a full-time transit mall similar to Bourke Street Mall. At present it looks like half a street and half a mall. Improvements could include high-intensity lighting, better tram waiting facilities (including cafes) and stronger controls on vehicular traffic presently allowed to enter.

Public transport users are the backbone of the city's user profile. To ignore their needs in favour of the intrusion of more motor traffic is to condemn the city to a declining future.

Public Transport First campaign gears up for federal election

The joint campaign run by the PTUA and its allies for diversion of the proposed Scoresby Freeway budget to public transport is moving into high gear as the election approaches.

This is our last chance to stop a billion dollars being wasted. If the freeway goes ahead, there will be no money left for public transport improvements anywhere in Melbourne.



Volunteers needed

Public Transport First is proposing to target marginal seats in the federal election to push the message that it's time to take public transport seriously. If you are able to help at all, distributing leaflets, or handing out how-to-vote cards on polling day, please call the PTUA office on 9650 7898.

Upcoming meetings

Come to the public meetings to be arranged in the electorates in which we are campaigning. See enclosed flyer for details.

More on the Federal election, ⇨ page 3

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Keeping in touch...

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Our home page is at www.ptua.org.au

Committee Members

Paul Mees – President
Anna Morton – Vice President
Vaughan Williams – Secretary
Les Chandra – Assistant Secretary
Daniel Borowski – Treasurer

Glen Boyce	Anthony Morton
John Cox	Miriam Powell
Roberto D'Andrea	Tim Petersen
Hayden Jones	David Robertson
Tim Mattingsbrooke	

Committee Meetings

Third Tuesday of each month. Members are welcome to attend. Please call the office for details

PTUA reviews PTCCC involvement

The PTUA and other community groups are working to improve the effectiveness of the Public Transport Customer Charter Committee process. The Committee was established last year after the privatisation of train and tram services in August 1999. The role of the PTCCC is to assist the Director of Public Transport and the Minister in supervising the private operators. Several community groups, including the PTUA, sit on the PTCCC.

The PTUA has observed that the PTCCC process is not being taken seriously by the private operators or the Department of Infrastructure. As a result, the PTUA and other groups are reviewing their participation in the PTCCC process. We have agreed to support the Consumer Law Centre Victoria on their demand for a Public Transport Ombudsman, and plan to prepare two demands of our own. These are likely to relate to timetabling and ticketing.

Regional News: Geelong

Public transport users in Geelong had two wins last month.

Geelong passengers can once again obtain integrated timetable information in book form. The booklet provides timetables of all public transport services run by the city's two bus companies.

This well-presented publication is available on buses, at the Geelong Railway Station (and at bus company depots) for 20 cents. It is worth noting that the booklet is an initiative of the bus companies and not the Department of Infrastructure.

Secondly, following lobbying from the Geelong Branch of the PTUA, the much-vandalised Corio railway station was cleaned up. The station had been neglected following the withdrawal of staff from the station by National Express over summer.

Copy deadline for the next PTUA news is 30th November

Newsletter production: Daniel Bowen, Peter Parker. Printed on recycled paper by Flash Print, Collingwood.
Our thanks to the dedicated mailout team.

Public Transport First (cont'd from page 1)

Bulleen meeting

A large and enthusiastic crowd of 600 packed the Veneto Club, Bulleen, for a public meeting organised by the Middle Yarra Anti-Freeway Alliance (MYAFA).

The meeting supported motions condemning plans for a freeway through Bulleen and Heidelberg, and opposing the Scoresby Freeway (construction of which would make the Bulleen link a fait accompli). MYAFA are continuing to meet and plan further activities.

Rowville/Monash rail line dropped

The government accidentally confirmed the scrapping of the train line in a letter sent to outer east residents (at taxpayers' expense) in September.

Instead of a rail link, the letter talks about "a possible light rail link" – in order words, a tram line, which would require a transfer to and from trains at Huntingdale to reach the city.

This appears to cast serious doubt on the genuineness of the \$1.5 million study of public transport announced by the Bracks government in the lead-up to the Aston by-election.

It also contrasts sharply with moves by the new Labor government in Western Australia, to extend Perth's successful Northern Suburbs rail line.

There are also plans in Perth for new lines to serve areas of the city that are currently remote from the train system.



Scoresby Freeway illegal?

PTUA president Paul Mees has written to VicRoads, Transport Minister Batchelor and Federal Environment Minister Hill, pointing out that the Scoresby Freeway requires approval under Commonwealth environmental legislation.

As no such approval has been sought, any move to build the freeway would be illegal. A court challenge is possible: keep watching the papers!

Legal threat to freeway plans

The Public Transport Users Association is threatening legal action over the Scoresby freeway, saying the Victorian Government has broken federal environment laws protecting wildlife.

The association has given the government seven days to suspend planning or face court over an alleged failure to obtain approval to build the freeway near an internationally listed wetland.

Association president and university transport lecturer Paul Mees said in a letter to Transport Minister Peter Batchelor that the freeway was likely to affect two endangered plant species and 25 types of migratory birds protected under treaties with China and Japan.

CLAIRE MILLER

- Age 4/10/2001

Government knocks back Ventura Sunday service request

Ventura, which operates bus services in Melbourne's southern and eastern suburbs, has failed in its bid to secure additional State Government funding to improve Sunday services.

Ventura had been seeking funds to introduce Sunday services on routes 732 and 767 as well as increasing services on other routes such as the 700.

Ventura say they have been advised that the current State Government has already met its budget forecasts and will not be funding service improvements.

The company is looking at other ways to supply the services and will be actively pursuing this over the next year.

Ventura has also urged passengers to contact their local Member of Parliament and express their concerns about the lack of Sunday public transport.

Though crying poor on Sunday services, the Government does not appear to be short of a buck or two when it comes to freeway construction and other projects of doubtful value such as 'SmartBus'.

Stop press: City Link appeal dismissed.

On 11th October, the High Court, by a majority decision, dismissed Peter Allan's appeal regarding standing to challenge the City Link tax breaks. Justice Kirby dissented and said Peter's appeal should have been allowed. More details next issue and at the AGM.

Trains: Contracts vs Reality

When Melbourne's train and tram services were privatised in 1999, the then Kennett government included conditions in the franchise contracts that specified the minimum service frequencies to be operated on each route. The aim was to ensure that services did not degrade, and in fact some contracts specified that services should increase over the time of the franchise.

But are the companies fulfilling their contractual obligations? While the requirements for off-peak services are reasonably easy to gauge, in peak hours for trains in particular, frequencies are harder to check. This is because most lines do not run to a rigid pattern during peak hours, with express services further confusing the issue.

Bayside/M>Train

The Bayside contract was based around a required frequency for trains on each station, measured at Richmond or North Melbourne (as appropriate). Morning peak is considered to be 7:31am to 9:00am. Evening peak is measured in two parts, 3:31pm to 6:30pm, and 6:31pm to 7:30pm, with different frequencies required for each.

In addition to the required frequencies, for some stations, a number of express trains are permitted in the contract. That is, some trains are permitted not to stop at particular stations, but still count towards the overall frequency.

For this study, we have only looked at peak hour services, to the city in the morning, and from the city in the afternoon/evening. In this first part of the article, we will present the results for Bayside Trains, run by National Express, and now trading as M>Train.

See the summary of peak hour services, on the facing page.

In Summary

While M>Train's services during peak hours meet or exceed the requirements of their contract in most cases, there are a handful of breaches. These all seem to occur due to running more express trains than are required (or permitted) in the contract.

In addition to this, because of some non-regular frequencies during peak hour, the actual gap between trains can be much more than the required frequency. For instance, passengers on the Frankston line at some stations are theoretically supposed to have a train every 8 minutes, but may in fact wait up to 18 minutes between trains *during peak hours*.

It should be noted that M>Train do exceed the required frequency for many off-peak services, including Sandringham evening services, and on all lines on Sunday nights. However, this should not prevent them meeting their obligations to peak hour passengers, many of whom may

be enduring overcrowding due to a shortage of trains.

And while the use of express trains to reduce travel times is to be applauded, this should not be at the expense of commuters travelling from the inner suburbs.

New timetables

With M>Train currently preparing to introduce new timetables in January, we urge them to check their contractual obligations carefully, and to introduce additional services where required to meet them.

We also encourage the government to more closely scrutinise all operators to ensure that they are complying with their contracts. Transport operators must not be permitted to ignore contracts just because it suits them.

In future articles we will examine the service frequencies of Connex, and the tram operators.

The figures presented on the next page are only a summary.

The full spreadsheet, showing how the actual frequencies was calculated, is available on the PTUA web site at www.ptua.org.au

The train and tram franchise contracts are available at www.contracts.vic.gov.au

Bayside Train Franchise Contracts vs Actual Service Levels

Service (Measured at)	Direction	Franchise frequency required (mins)	Actual frequency	Contract met?	Longest gap
Dandenong to Pakenham (Richmond)	To Melb 7:31-9:00am	20	22.50	BREACH	26
	From Melb 3:31-6:30pm	20	20.00	✓	36
	From Melb 6:31-7:30pm	30	20.00	✓	29
Dandenong to Cranbourne (Richmond)	To Melb 7:31-9:00am	30	22.50	✓	27
	From Melb 3:31-6:30pm	30	20.00	✓	25
	From Melb 6:31-7:30pm	30	20.00	✓	30
Carnegie to Dandenong (Richmond)	To Melb 7:31-9:00am	8	9.00	BREACH	14
	From Melb 3:31-6:30pm	10	10.00	✓	18
	From Melb 6:31-7:30pm	15	12.00	✓	16
Frankston to Glenhuntly (Richmond)	To Melb 7:31-9:00am	8	9.00	BREACH	18
	From Melb 3:31-6:30pm	10	10.59	BREACH	17
	From Melb 6:31-7:30pm	20	15.00	✓	20
Armadale to Hawksburn (Richmond)	To Melb 7:31-9:00am	10	9.00	✓	13
	From Melb 3:31-6:30pm	12	11.25	✓	14
	From Melb 6:31-7:30pm	12	8.57	✓	17
Malvern (Richmond)	To Melb 7:31-9:00am	8	6.00	✓	11
	From Melb 3:31-6:30pm	10	8.18	✓	13
	From Melb 6:31-7:30pm	10	5.45	✓	9
Sandringham to Prahran (Richmond)	To Melb 7:31-9:00am	12	10.00	✓	10
	From Melb 3:31-6:30pm	12	10.59	✓	12
	From Melb 6:31-7:30pm	15	15.00	✓	15
Broadmeadows to Kensington (North Melbourne)	To Melb 7:31-9:00am	10	9.00	✓	13
	From Melb 3:31-6:30pm	15	10.59	✓	14
	From Melb 6:31-7:30pm	20	20.00	✓	20
St Albans to Middle Footscray (North Melbourne)	To Melb 7:31-9:00am	20	15.00	✓	20
	From Melb 3:31-6:30pm	20	15.00	✓	20
	From Melb 6:31-7:30pm	30	30.00	✓	28
Werribee to Seaholme (North Melbourne)	To Melb 7:31-9:00am	20	22.50	BREACH	20
	From Melb 3:31-6:30pm	20	18.00	✓	20
	From Melb 6:31-7:30pm	20	20.00	✓	20
Williamstown to North Williamstown (North Melbourne)	To Melb 7:31-9:00am	20	18.00	✓	20
	From Melb 3:31-6:30pm	20	18.00	✓	20
	From Melb 6:31-7:30pm	30	30.00	✓	29
Seddon to Spotswood (North Melbourne)	To Melb 7:31-9:00am	20	18.00	✓	20
	From Melb 3:31-6:30pm	20	20.00	✓	20
	From Melb 6:31-7:30pm	30	30.00	✓	28
Upfield to Macaulay (North Melbourne)	To Melb 7:31-9:00am	20	18.00	✓	20
	From Melb 3:31-6:30pm	20	20.00	✓	20
	From Melb 6:31-7:30pm	30	30.00	✓	20

Letter to the Editor

I would like to comment on several issues in the August Newsletter.

Suggestions were invited for a policy review of the fares system for Melbourne. May I suggest that the fairest way of paying for the metropolitan transport system is the same as for the metropolitan water system – through a rating system, or levy on each household. Like water, each household could have an allocation of trips at a nominal cost, with payment at a set rate for 'excess travel'.

Revenue collected could be distributed to private operators on the basis of their carryings. I'm sorry but conductors would only be needed to assist and advise passengers. This system would ensure that those who clog the road system by using their cars excessively would pay for the privilege by subsidising the rest of us.

The article concerning the long-awaited airport rail link quoted Skybus as claiming the Brisbane Airtrain had not achieved expected patronage. This major improvement opened only a few weeks ago, so it's unlikely that many air travellers have realised its potential. The new short branch to the Airport, serving both domestic and international terminals is an extension of the busiest commuter line thought Brisbane from the Gold Coast, but interchanges conveniently with all the other lines in the city centre. The City to Airport

fare of \$9 is added to the normal fare from the point of origin. Thus I can travel from the Gold Coast (85km away) and return for \$37. Rather than aiming for the 3% of airport users that Skybus services, I should think Airtrain is likely to achieve 50% + over the next few years.

As a former Geelong resident, I was disappointed to hear of the regression of the GTS bus system. In the early nineties the new Greater City embarked on an Energy Conservation Strategy which had a transport component, and ideas for actually running trains or trams on the cross-city rail system were floated, but these must have got stuck in the traffic. It amazes me how transport authorities can propose spending half a billion on a bypass to generate more traffic, when it is quite obvious they could create a world-class public transport system with the same funds.

- Robin Spragg, Terranora NSW



Petitioners seek bus shelter removal

A group of petitioners is seeking modification of illuminated Adshel bus shelters in the Warrandyte area.

The petition, which is being circulated by Kerrie Boyle, is said to have nearly 1000 signatures. The petitioners' main objections appear to be that the shelters carry advertising and that light from the shelters is disruptive to wildlife in the area.

Bus passengers have supported the new shelters. They provide a safe and well-lit waiting area and assist drivers to see waiting passengers, especially in low-visibility conditions.

A majority of letters appearing in the Manningham Leader have indicated support for the shelters. The local council also appears to be taking a dim view of the petition.

It is regrettable that the petitioners are opposing this small but worthwhile public transport improvement in the Warrandyte area.

As for the illuminated shelters being opposed on environmental grounds, we all know how good cars are for the environment, and what causes 'road kill'!

PTUA to run Bourke Street tram campaign

The Public Transport Users Association is to campaign against the removal of trams from the Bourke Street Mall.

We are planning a leaflet to warn tram travellers of the proposal, which would increase travel times and inconvenience passengers.

The leaflets would include tear-off slips for passengers to fill in. These could be presented to Minister for Transport Peter Bachelor to convey the community's depth of feeling on the matter.

As reported in the August newsletter, the removal of trams from Bourke Street Mall would see trams terminate in the city or deviate via Lonsdale Street.

The deviation proposal would add extra turns to already slow routes and increase travel times. The longer route would also make it more difficult to maintain frequent services with the current number of vehicles and drivers.

The mall is traversed by 70 000 tram travellers per day. The PTUA is puzzled that mall retailers would wish to drive such numbers of potential customers away from their doors.

Experience has shown that pedestrians can coexist with trams. There have been no fatalities or serious injuries in the mall's 25 year history.

Volunteers are needed to distribute leaflets. Please

contact the PTUA office if you can help.

PTUA appears before Parliamentary Committee

The PTUA's Paul Mees and Anna Morton gave evidence to the Economic Development Committee of the Victorian Legislative Council. The all-party committee was conducting an enquiry into structural changes in the Victorian Economy. The meeting took place on August 22.

The PTUA briefed the committee on the important historical role of rail transport in Victoria. We pointed out that the rail network was centred on Melbourne and rail transport between regional centres was largely non-existent. This meant that rail was unsuitable for most intra-region travel and often lost out to competition from buses and cars. It is likely that the net effect of rail was to encourage the growth of Melbourne at the expense of regional centres.

We warned the committee not to make the same mistake when planning Victoria's new fast rail services. Instead of concentrating on commuter travel to the city by bypassing smaller towns and only providing peak-hour service (that would only benefit Melbourne), service should be frequent and link with buses from smaller centres. This would satisfy a wider variety of travel needs within regions, while still serving commuters.

We quoted examples from Switzerland and France on the impact of differing public transport service patterns, and, in particular the desirability of comprehensive regional services over express commuter travel.

We also emphasised that careful planning and management was

more important than significant additional infrastructure in providing Victoria with a world-class transport system.

Bus strike strands thousands

Bus travellers in Melbourne's south-east were stranded by a strike last month. The strike cancelled Ventura services for three mornings between September 19 and 21.

Neither Ventura nor the Department of Infrastructure appeared to have arrangements in place for managing the disruption. Passenger information was sparse, with no information on the DOI website. Only one radio station (ABC 774) was making announcements.

Some travellers had to travel via Caulfield, South Yarra or Richmond railway stations to complete their trip. In many cases these people had to pay extra fares to travel via zone 1. Others had to cancel their arrangements altogether or take a taxi.

Public transport should be regarded as an essential service, similar to electricity and telecommunications. The DOI should introduce a strategy to manage future service disruptions to minimise passenger inconvenience. Such a strategy could include measures such as (i) use of other bus lines to temporarily cover routes, (ii) reimbursement of zone 1 fares paid by those usually travelling in zone 2, (iii) media release from the Minister to inform passengers.

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PTUA Office, Second Floor, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000

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PTUA 25th Anniversary and Annual General Meeting Thursday November 15th - Details inside!

The election procedure allows for the AGM to elect a President, Secretary and Treasurer and up to nine Committee members. Nominations must be on the form attached and signed by the nominator and the candidate, both of whom must be current financial members of the PTUA.

Nominations must be received by the PTUA Secretary (2nd floor, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne) by hand or mail by 4:00pm Friday 2nd November 2001. Nominations will not be called for at the AGM unless fewer than 12 nominations have been received by this closing date.

PTUA Committee Nomination Form

I, _____ of _____

nominate _____ of _____

for election to the position of: President Secretary Treasurer Committee member

Signed: _____ (nominator) _____ (candidate) ___/___/___ (date)

Changed your address?

Make sure your PTUA News follows you when you move!

Cut out or photocopy this form, fill in and return to us at
PTUA, Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000.

Name _____

New address _____

Town / Suburb _____ Postcode _____

Phone (H) _____ (W) _____ (M) _____

Email _____

Responsibility for electoral comment in PTUA News is taken by Vaughan Williams, 247 Flinders Lane Melbourne.