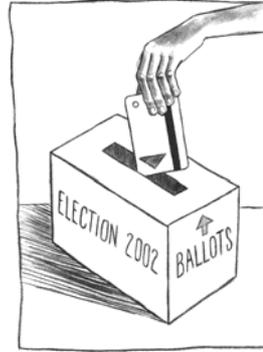


State Election: Freeway building the ultimate vote-loser



November 30th's election result shows that freeway building is no longer accepted by middle suburbia. The defeat of several pro-freeway MPs and candidates, together with the high Green vote, confirmed that Melburnians regarded improved public transport as a higher priority than freeway building.

Liberal candidates in seats such as Mitcham and Forest Hill all campaigned heavily on a platform of immediate construction of the Eastern and Scoresby (Mitcham - Frankston) freeways. By contrast, the Greens campaigned heavily on a platform of cancelling the freeways and diverting resources to public transport. The Liberal Party lost these seats, with a record vote going to the Greens instead.

Likewise, Shadow Transport Minister Geoff Leigh campaigned aggressively for the Dingley Freeway, but was defeated in his own seat of Mordialloc.

These results show that promising to build freeways is no longer a vote winner. Instead, it can be seen as the ultimate vote loser.

Given that the ALP ultimately won these seats on anti-freeway Green votes, the PTUA hopes that the new Labor government will step in to review their own pro-freeway policies, or else they may find similar anger at the ballot box at the next election.

The PTUA has spent a good deal of time, energy and money over the past few years researching alternatives to these freeways (see "It's Time to Move", right), and we'd be happy to speak to any of the incoming Members of Parliament, to help them formulate new, pro-public transport policies.

See also ⇒ **Govt's Christmas present: Higher fares, slashed services – page 5**
⇒ **Secret freeway plans – page 6**

It's Time to Move

The PTUA's flagship policy paper, *It's Time to Move*, was launched by prominent academic Professor Peter Newman in October. The launch took place at Flinders Street Station at 12:30pm on Tuesday October 29. PTUA committee members and journalists attended the launch.

The general public and Association members were able to purchase copies of *It's Time to Move* from a stall set up at the station. Brochures summarising the book were also handed out.

After the gathering the PTUA exchanged ideas about transport policy and political lobbying with Professor Newman. Peter had much experience in the area, having founded "Friends of the Railways" in Perth and successfully lobbied for the electrification and expansion of Perth's rail system.

Continued ⇒ **page 2**

Stop press: M>Gone

As we go to press, National Express has announced its withdrawal from tram and train services in Victoria.

The government's reaction has been to push for Yarra Trams to take over M>Tram, and Connex to take over M>Train, under new contracts to take effect sometime in the next 12 months. We believe Melbourne is better served if the system remained as a government operation – or if private companies are to run the system, that this is done strictly on a contract basis, and that responsibility for timetabling, planning and co-ordination be done centrally by the government.

For public transport to be competitive with the car, it must be run as one system, with different modes not competing, but complementing each other. While the private companies proposed a marketing initiative of this type earlier in the year, nothing has come of it. Now is the government's chance to make it happen.

More on this issue in the next edition.

Also in this issue

Geelong branch news	2
Ticketing: Technology not the answer	3
AGM / Your committee for 2003	4
Letter to the editor / In Brief.....	5

Keeping in touch...

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The PTUA members' discussion list is at
www.yahogroups.com/group/ptua

Stay up to date with PTUA news via the
PTUA Announcements mailing list
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Committee

Les Chandra – President
Anna Morton - Vice President
Vaughan Williams – Secretary
Daniel Borowski – Treasurer
Daniel Bowen - Newsletter editor
Peter Cook
John Cox
Martin Koval
Jeremy Lunn
Tim Mattingsbrooke
Anthony Morton
Tim Petersen – Convenor, Geelong branch
David Robertson

Committee Meetings

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

Geelong branch news

Geelong Branch members handed out a Geelong public transport policy scorecard at central Geelong railway stations on the Thursday and Friday mornings before the election. Many thanks to all members who gave up their time to inform commuters about the different parties' policies, and show the politicians that we're serious about improving public transport.

Post-election, we'll be subjecting the Government's "cut-price" Grovedale Station plans to further scrutiny. Labor has proposed only 58 services per week to the station (compared to 300 per week to Geelong Station) and has cut a ticket office and extra track from the original plans. We'll also keep the pressure up on bus services around the region, and especially on the Bellarine Peninsula.

It's Time to Move

Continued from page 1

It's Time to Move was edited by Tony Morton with input from many PTUA members. It explains why a change in transport policy is needed and the benefits of shifting car trips to public transport. Recommendations include buses, trains and trams at least every ten minutes, train and tram line extensions, more direct bus routes, service co-ordination, return of conductors and a new transport network for rural Victoria. Costings show that our proposals are cheaper than road-based measures, and have many added social and environmental benefits.

The timing of *It's Time to Move* meant that the PTUA was better prepared than most for last month's state election. As you saw in last month's newsletter, we used it as the basis for comparing parties' policies on public transport. We also distributed copies widely, including to many parliamentarians and candidates before the election.

It's Time to Move is available for \$10 (members) or \$15 (non-members). To obtain your copy, call the PTUA office or visit our website at www.ptua.org.au and click on Publications.

Copy deadline for the next PTUA news is 15th January 2003

Newsletter production: Daniel Bowen, Peter Parker and Vaughan Williams. Printed on recycled paper by Flash Print, Collingwood.

Our thanks to Max Nicholson and the rest of the dedicated mail out team.

Ticketing: Technology not the Answer

(And what was the question anyway?)

Some members may have noticed a display of shiny electronic gizmos being set up on the concourse at Flinders Street recently. This is the first sign of the ticketing system that may ultimately replace Metcard. We encourage members to inspect the display and give their views both to us and to the Government.

Members will recall that the Government has established a Taskforce to examine the problems with the Metcard system. Unfortunately, this taskforce has continued to operate in a secretive manner. It is made up entirely of representatives from the operators and the department, and the PTUA has been unable to obtain representation or meaningful input to the process.

The taskforce appears to be obsessed with technological solutions, and has already set its sights on a smartcard-based system. The taskforce is not examining the real issues, such as re-staffing the system and extending fully multimodal fares to outer areas and services such as Skybus.

The Taskforce conducted some market research into what passengers wanted in a new system, but has refused to make this research publicly available. The PTUA has now pursued this and other information held by the Taskforce under Freedom of Information legislation in the interests of a more informed debate. At the time of the first Met Ticketing Taskforce in 1991, market research showed strong public support for the recommendations of that Taskforce, which are PTUA policy (essentially, cheap, low-tech

machines to print and validate tickets alongside a fully staffed system).

A Smartcard based system would:

- Cost hundreds of millions of dollars to implement. This is enough to pay for one or more new rail lines as proposed in *It's Time to Move*.
- Require passengers to validate on boarding **and leaving every vehicle**. This means that a passenger who catches a bus to their station, a train to the city, and a tram to their office or university each day must validate their ticket twelve times a day. Given that passengers cannot currently be persuaded to validate once per trip, it is difficult to see them validating twice.
- Confuse passengers, who would have control over which products they purchase and the amount they spend removed and placed in the hands of a computer.
- Be just as subject to vandalism and frequent breakdowns as Metcard.
- Require a continuation of the current policy of aggressive, hide-and-seek enforcement, which is proving unsuccessful.
- Fail to defuse the informal campaign of civil disobedience currently being pursued by some passengers.
- Has the potential for magnetic fields to interfere with other cards in people's wallets during validation
- Be so good at tracking passenger movements that civil libertarians would probably object to it as an invasion of privacy.
- Fail to help occasional travellers, who would still have to use unreliable

machines that only take coins and sell a limited selection of tickets, with no staff to assist them.

- Make it easier for future governments or operators to abolish multimodal fares (the single most successful patronage growth initiative in the last 30 years in Melbourne).

The PTUA believes that this sort of reliance on technology and fixation on particular hardware is precisely what caused the failure of Metcard in the first place.

Our Ticketing Campaign will continue to push for genuine improvements to rectify the fundamental flaws of Metcard and resolve the problems that it causes for both passengers and operators.

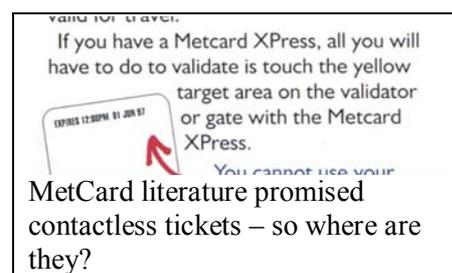
We believe the best solution to fare evasion, vandalism and personal safety issues is more staff on the system. And that while the Smartcard solutions proposed have one major benefit to users – “contactless” tickets that don't have to be physically placed into a validator – this was originally meant to be included with the Metcard system, and fixing this would be a lot simpler and cheaper than completely re-engineering the ticket system.

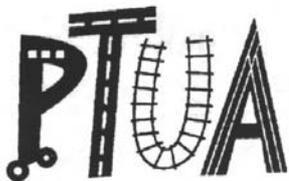
For more information or to offer assistance, contact Vaughan Williams at secretary@ptua.org.au

More information:

⇒ Ticketing display at Flinders Street Station (near Swanston Street entrance)

⇒ www.doi.vic.gov.au/ticketing





Annual General Meeting

The PTUA's Annual General Meeting was held on 2nd October. PTUA office bearers Les Chandra, Vaughan Williams and Daniel Borowski reported to members on the year's activities and members discussed the state of public transport in Victoria. This year, an election was held for Committee positions and some information about the new Committee is provided here. If you were unable to attend and would like a copy of the Secretary's report to the meeting, please contact the Office.

The 2003 Committee will hold its Strategic Planning Weekend in January. See the February newsletter for details of our plans for 2003. And if there are any particular issues members would like us to consider taking up this year, please let us know.

Your committee for 2003

At the Annual General Meeting, the following committee members were elected:

Les Chandra (President) has served on the committee of the PTUA since the early-90s. He commutes to work daily by the 822 bus and is perpetually frustrated at the poor level of service offered.

Anna Morton (Vice President) has been on the committee for five years. She lives in East Brunswick, and relies on PT, cycling and walking for transport, having no good enough reason to own a car.

Vaughan Williams (Secretary) is a law student with a long history

of sustainable transport activism. He has been Secretary of the PTUA since 1999. His objectives for 2003 include finishing his degree and getting a real job.

Daniel Borowski (Treasurer) is just completing his Bachelor of Commerce degree from Melbourne University. Once that has been finished, he will embark upon a new path; this time a planning course at RMIT. Daniel believes his life could be a whole lot more effective if he spent less time waiting for trams and buses.

Daniel Bowen (Newsletter editor) lives in Glen Huntly, and came *this close* to ditching his car recently when a \$3500 repair bill arrived. Only infrequent and slow public transport stopped him doing so.

Peter Cook lives in Moonee Ponds and is a Database Administrator for NCR. Formerly a motorcyclist, he resolved to never buy a car prior to giving up the motorcycle, later purchased a pushbike, and by choice is now reliant on PT, Cycling and Walking.

John Cox is a Country Program Manager with Australian Volunteers International, based in Fitzroy. John has a particular focus on the Pacific Region, where he manages volunteer programs in the Solomon Islands and Samoa.

Martin Koval has long been a victim of the "midnight curfew" on public transport. Now he lives closer to the pub and goes home early.

Jeremy Lunn is an 18 year old student from Box Hill. He has been putting up with mediocre train services and bus routes that meander their way slowly through the suburbs. Jeremy's pet hate is evening and late night public transport, or the lack thereof.

Tim Mattingsbrooke is a long-suffering commuter of the Hurstbridge train line (beyond

Eltham!). He is a member of the Liberal Party, where he actively campaigns for improvement of the Party's Transport Policy.

Tony Morton is an engineering academic at Monash University and a long-suffering patron of the North Road bus. He joined the PTUA in 1996 and has since been active on the Committee, serving as Newsletter Editor between 1997 and 2000 and coordinating the production of our new policy document "It's Time To Move".

Tim Petersen (Convenor, Geelong branch) is an Arts/Law student at the University of Melbourne and lives in Geelong. He spends too much of his time on and waiting for public transport. He's inspired by the potential for greener, cheaper and more socially equitable transport throughout Victoria.

David Robertson is a public servant, and an active member of such organisations as Amnesty International and Community Aid Abroad.

Our thanks to the retiring committee members: Bronwen Machin, Lucy Oates, Luke Savage, Hayden Jones and Miriam Powell.



Govt's Christmas present: Higher fares, slashed services

We condemn plans to slash services over the summer, approved by the Director of Public Transport.

We believe that the Director, Peter Harris, had failed to act in the public interest by approving the cancellation of 58 train services and allowing tram services to be cut by about a third.

It is clear that the Director and the Minister have sold out the travelling public. The operators are in financial difficulties and suffering from staff shortages. They don't want to have to pay overtime while their drivers go on leave in January. It's in their interests to cut services, and it's part of Mr Batchelor's job to stop them.

Tram services will be particularly hard hit over the summer. For instance, the 96 will be cut from every 7.5 minutes during the day to every 10 – 12 minutes.

The Government is also to be condemned for the secrecy surrounding the service cuts. The Passenger's Charter requires the Director to consult an advisory Committee before approving timetable changes. This Committee met the day before the State Election, but the cuts were not disclosed to the Committee. Surely the Director was aware that the Committee would have strongly objected to cuts of this magnitude. Instead, we get a letter curtly informing us that drastic service cuts have been approved.

Perhaps Mr Harris needs to check his dictionary for the meaning of 'consult'.

A fare increase on 1 January, alongside the service cuts, will have a further adverse impact on patronage.

The fare increase adds insult to injury for public transport users.

Public transport fares are already uncompetitive with driving for many trips, and increasing fares only makes it more so. Higher fares and slashed services are no way to increase patronage, and will only further entrench car dependency.

Letter to the editor

Letters may be e-mailed to newsletter@ptua.org.au – no attachments please – or sent to the office – see address on page 2.

I am writing to correct what appears to be a misconception of the relationship between the Scoresby Freeway and the PTUA/Knox Environment Society campaign for better public transport in the outer east.

[See PTUA News, September, p7 – ed]

Our campaign did not "give the road engineers fuel to pull their Scoresby Freeway plans out of the drawer." The plans were out already in 1995, when we started the campaign: Vicroads started the process of getting funding for the freeway in January of 1994 (see their Forward Roads Strategy for that year).

I wouldn't want anyone to think that if we had kept quiet, Vicroads would simply have gone away!

Paul Mees, Fitzroy.

In Brief...

New M>trains too wide?

National Express has been testing its new "Nexas" suburban trains recently. Perhaps surprisingly, they have found that in some cases, they are too wide for the existing platforms! It remains to be seen how this problem will be dealt with – and whether or not the taxpayer ends up paying for platform modifications to fix it.

PTUA Late Night Campaign

The PTUA's Late Night Campaign team will be conducting surveys of Melbourne's late night community over the coming weeks. We hope to have more news of this in the next newsletter. Meanwhile M>Train has announced that New Years Eve services this year will run merely to 1am, which must leave visitors wondering if Melbourne's nightlife is really all it's cracked up to be.

Now it's two daily trains for Ararat

According to local papers, when train services are returned to Ararat next year there will now be two services each day from Ararat to Melbourne. It took a good deal of lobbying by local groups such as the Wimmera Mallee Rail Service Association to achieve even this modest level of service. This is a good start, but given that there are already 5 V/line buses a day between Ballarat and Ararat (and beyond) there is clearly still more to be done.

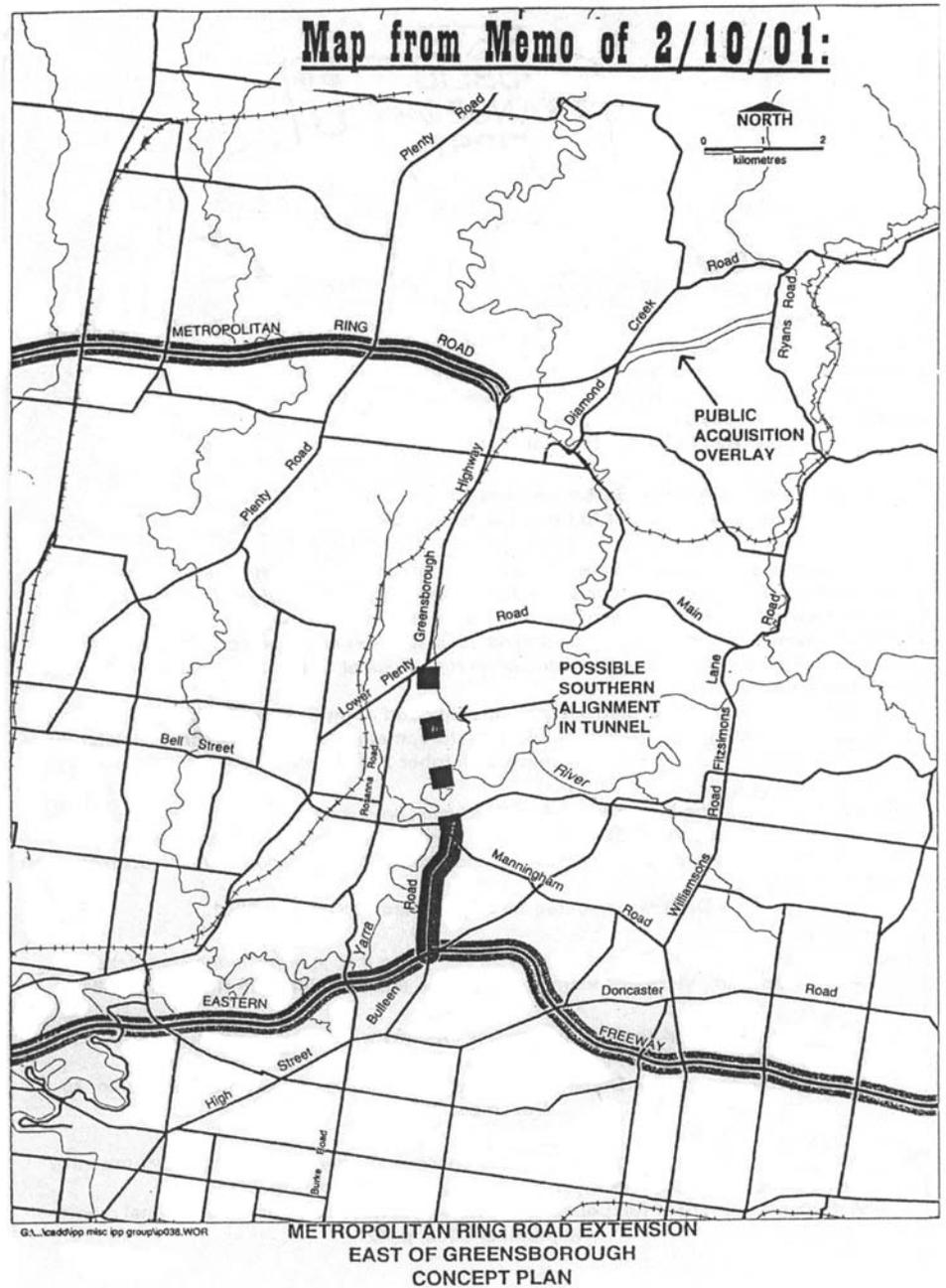
Judicial inquiry called for on secret freeway plans

Sustainable transport groups are calling for a full judicial inquiry into ring freeways in Melbourne, in light of revelations made in *The Age* on 31 October 2002 of secret Vicroads plans for an 8-lane freeway through Heidelberg.

The Heidelberg freeway is the 'missing link' in a complete ring road around Melbourne, of which the proposed \$1.8 billion Mitcham-Frankston (née Scoresby) Freeway is a key part. Active consideration of the Heidelberg link at the top levels of the Department of Infrastructure dates back to the Kennett Government's "Linking Melbourne" strategy of 1994. At that time the 'missing link' and the Scoresby Freeway were envisaged as a single project. However, by 1996 the controversial link across the Yarra was being played down, while planning studies commenced on the Scoresby with all references to the 'missing link' dropped.

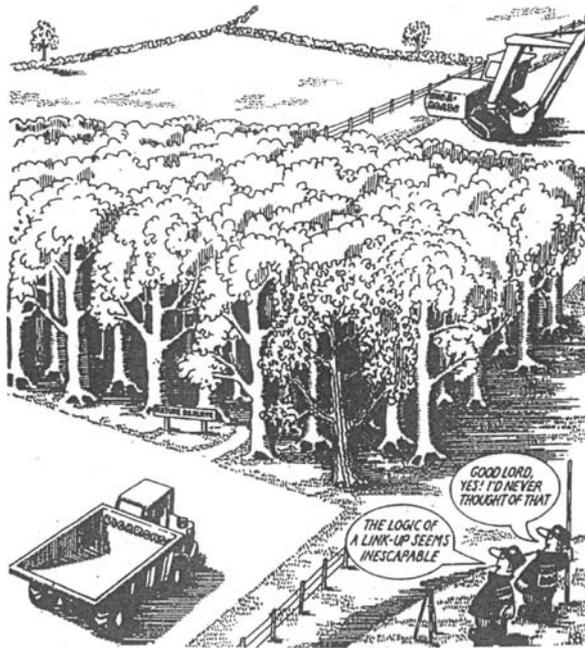
Today, the Bracks Government is publicly committed to what road signs describe as the "Eastern Ring Road (Scoresby Section)" while maintaining that it has no proposal under consideration for any link between the Eastern Freeway and the Northern Ring Road. This is despite the finding in the Environment Effects Statement that around 2,000 additional trucks a day would use the Scoresby Freeway to bypass Citylink and wind up in the Yarra Valley. (Currently the Banksia Street bridge at Heidelberg carries about 200 trucks a day.)

The government's denials, however, are contrary to evidence presented in the Federal Court in October, in a case brought by former PTUA President Paul Mees under



Commonwealth environment legislation. The evidence consists of private memos between senior planners in the Department of Infrastructure and Vicroads and former Planning Minister John Thwaites.

They clearly show that as recently as October last year, plans for the Heidelberg freeway were under active consideration (though an alternative proposal via Eltham and Warrandyte now appears to have been revoked).



Among the evidence is a draft version of the Metropolitan Strategy dated 16 October 2001, which states:

“The need to complete the Metropolitan Ring Road must be resolved. Construction of the Ring Road will not occur through the Eltham area, and therefore an alternative route must be considered... A review will be undertaken of the need and options for completion of the Metropolitan Ring Road.”

At around the same time, a map prepared for Thwaites by the Department of Infrastructure shows the proposed freeway following Bulleen Road and slicing through Heide Gallery and houses in Rosanna before joining Greensborough Road in Macleod.

The publicly released version of the Metropolitan Strategy omits all references to the completion of the Ring Road. Documents received and read out as evidence in the Federal Court give light to possible reasons why the study on completing the ring road from Bulleen to Greensborough was suppressed from the public.

Referring to the study, one senior bureaucrat wrote:

“Current court case...claims that Scoresby Freeway will force a link through Melbourne's NE. This could appear to support [the case]”

The writer of the memo went on to recommend that the writers of the Strategy “Reconsider inclusion of this study.” -- (Murray Cullinan, senior transport planner, Department of Infrastructure)

Similar messages were sent by other bureaucrats:

“It would be most unfortunate if the strategy went out saying this, in terms of the court case.” -- (Clive Mottram, Vicroads, memo to Director of Metropolitan Strategy)

Transport Minister Peter Batchelor's statement denying the existence of plans for a ring-freeway through Heidelberg were made to Parliament on 9 October 2001 - one week before a draft of the Metropolitan Strategy acknowledged their existence, and a month before the above memos asked for the relevant section to be removed.

The case before the Federal Court now awaits judgement. However, it will deal only with the narrow issue of compliance with Federal environmental regulations. The wider questions - the effect of the Mitcham-Frankston Freeway on the Yarra Valley, the inevitability of the ‘missing link’ if the freeway goes ahead, and the possible alternatives to a complete ring-freeway around Melbourne - have never been officially explored.

On 11 November, during the recent State election campaign, about 500 people attended a public meeting in Ivanhoe to consider these issues. The meeting enthusiastically supported a call for a full judicial inquiry into all ring-freeway plans, controlled by an independent judge rather than by road engineers or politicians, and for the suspension of plans for the Mitcham-Frankston Freeway until the outcome of this inquiry is known.

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