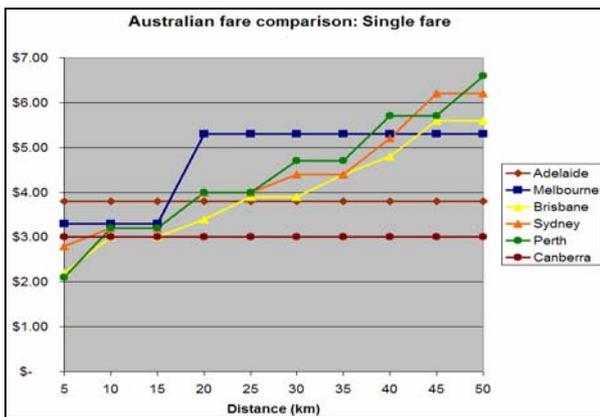




Melbourne's fares the highest in the country

A PTUA study of public transport fares around the country has revealed that for most trips, Melbourne's fares are the highest of any of Australia's mainland capital cities.

With some exceptions, such as short trips that are more expensive under Adelaide's flat-fare system, and very long Melbourne suburban trips recently made cheaper by the removal of zone 3, Melbourne's fares outstripped those in Adelaide, Brisbane, Perth and Sydney.



The study compared fares for single tickets, return/daily, off-peak return (which is not available in Melbourne for zone 1-only trips, but is provided by most other cities), and weekly or ten trip tickets.

Over the years, Melbourne's fares have risen markedly. While in most cases the increase is tied to CPI, in January 2004 fares rose by an average of 9.8%, with Short Trip/Rail+2 fares being removed from sale at the same time, making for close to a doubling in cost for some users.

Continued ⇒ Page 6

Coming events	2
Bus network reviews commence	3
Regional/Geelong/South East	4
Why the minister must reconsider privatisation	5
Transport ignored in climate change debate	6
State budget	7

10 extra trains coming, but more needed



After months of lobbying from the PTUA behind the scenes and in the media, the state budget on May 1st announced the purchase of ten extra suburban trains, to enter service from 2009. This is welcome news for passengers, as overcrowding has become rampant in recent months – even on days when the system is running smoothly with no cancellations.

But there is obvious concern about the delay before the extra trains come into service – and some have noted that if patronage continues to rise, these ten (along with small numbers of Hitachi trains brought back into service) will need to be quickly supplemented with orders for more in the coming years.

Indeed, ten trains running (perhaps) two extra trips each peak hour would only account for a maximum of around 10 million passenger journeys per year. Current figures show patronage of 170 million journeys per year, and the government conservatively estimates continued growth of 3.6% per year until 2012 (Minister Kosky to Public Accounts and Estimates Committee, 9th May).

Assuming that figure is right, and that much of that growth is in peak hour, the additional capacity from the ten trains will barely cover the extra passengers, meaning the government will need to keep ordering around 5 more trains every year just to keep up.

PTUA's plans for the trains ⇒ Page 3

Keeping in touch...

PTUA office

247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne
Telephone (03) 9650 7898
e-mail: office@ptua.org.au

Membership Enquiries

Call or e-mail the office (see above)

PTUA members can obtain cheap yearly Metcards – see

www.ptua.org.au/members/offers

Internet

Our web site is at www.ptua.org.au

The PTUA runs email lists for member discussions, and to stay up to date with PTUA events, and view archived newsletters online:

www.ptua.org.au/members/resources

Committee

Daniel Bowen – President, Newsletter
Alex Makin – Vice-president
Anthony Morton – Secretary
Kerryn Wilmot – Treasurer

Phil Bourke
Mark Johnson
Tim Long
Rob Meredith
Anthony Pitt
David Robertson
Tim Petersen
Chris Trikalis
Vaughan Williams

Branch convenors:

Paul Westcott – Geelong
Jeremy Lunn – Outer East
June Whitton – South East

Committee Meetings

Meetings are on the last Thursday of each month. Members are welcome to observe. Please call or e-mail the office for details

All committee members can be emailed using the format:

**firstname.lastname@
ptua.org.au**

Coming events

Film screening: A Crude Awakening

“A Crude Awakening: The Oil Crash”, a benefit screening for the Australian Association for the Study of Peak Oil.

Cinema Nova (380 Lygon Street, Carlton)
7pm, Tuesday 5th June 2007

\$20, or \$18 concession – includes a glass of wine on arrival.

After the film, there will be a discussion with Kenneth Davidson (The Age), Phil Hart (former Shell UK) and Elliot Fishman (Institute for Sensible Transport)

City of Yarra Community Cabinet

Local residents’ chance to discuss important issues, such as transport, with state cabinet ministers. Wednesday 27th June 2007.

⇒ www.yarracity.vic.gov.au

Film screening, Croydon

The Croydon Conservation Society is screening “An Inconvenient Truth” and “End of Suburbia”, at the Luther College Lecture Theatre (Plymouth Road,

Croydon). 7:30pm, Thursday 28th of June at 7:30pm. Melway 36 H12. Bus route 366 from Ringwood or Croydon Stations.

PTUA at the human sign

PTUA members were among many who participated in a human sign forming the words “Halt climate change now!” at Sandringham Beach on 22nd of April. The event was aimed at raising awareness of climate change issues with governments, particularly at the state and federal level, and got widespread media coverage.

Afterwards many of those present visited the PTUA stall at the nearby Bayside Council Sustainable Living Expo – in fact for a period the tent was overflowing with interested visitors.



(Picture: ABC Television)

Copy deadline for the next PTUA news is 30th June 2007

Newsletter contributors: Daniel Bowen, Alex Makin, Tony Morton, Paul Westcott, Vaughan Williams, Kerryn Wilmot. Printed on recycled paper by Flash Print, Collingwood. Our thanks to Jeremy Lunn and the rest of the dedicated mailout team. And a special thanks to Max Nicholson, who recently retired from mailouts after 20 years service. If anybody can assist us with future newsletter mailouts, please contact the office by phone 9650 7898 or email office@ptua.org.au

Time for action on suburban trains

With commuters enduring continuing pain on the rails, the PTUA has prepared an action plan on suburban trains, highlighting improvements that can be made in the next twelve months, as well as longer-term actions to improve the system.

We've consulted with the government and Connex on the plan, and although they don't agree with all of our specific points, there is broad agreement that the train service needs an overhaul.

Short-term measures advocated by the PTUA include:

- Boosting shoulder-peak services to help spread peak loads over a wider timeframe
- Returning to service any Hitachi trains that are able to be done so cost-effectively
- Ordering extra trains (more than the ten announced in the state budget)

- Almost all trains to run as six cars until at least 10pm, seven days-a-week
- Review stopping patterns and operations to simplify stopping patterns and get more peak hour services running
- Boost off-peak services to at least every 15 minutes to midnight, seven-days-a-week (20 minutes on the Northern group lines until the Altona loop and any other bottlenecks are fixed)
- Upgrading frequency and operating hours of bus and tram services (where required) to connect better to trains

Longer-term measures include duplicating remaining sections of single track, providing railway stations to areas currently bypassed by trains (such as Southland),



electrifying existing diesel lines (such as to Sunbury, Melton and Baxter) and building new lines and extensions (including to South Morang and Mernda, and East Doncaster.)

None of these steps are particularly radical. But they are essential to bring our train network up to world-class standards, and to achieve the 20% by 2020 public transport mode-share target.

You can read the full plan at:

⇒ www.ptua.org.au

Bus network reviews commence

Melbourne's Bus reviews have begun with a series of meetings seeking public input regarding bus routes in the Hobsons

Bay/Maribyrnong/Moonee Valley area. The PTUA was able to attend one of the three scheduled workshops in March along with other community representatives.

The Hobsons Bay/Moonee Valley area was chosen as the first review because it has among the oldest unchanged bus routes in Melbourne. Looking at these routes on paper one is confounded with all the strange deviations that many buses follow; winding down back streets for no apparent reason. It is pleasing to see that the Department of

Infrastructure is seeking as much input and feedback from as many interested parties as possible with these Bus reviews.

The meeting that the PTUA attended had seating available for a vastly higher number of people than actually turned up. If any PTUA member has contacts with, or is a member of, a community group that is affected by any of the bus reviews then we would encourage them to attend the meeting and/or provided written submissions for their area when it is reviewed. The organisers of the review are trying very hard to attract as many participants as possible into the process.

The PTUA would like to thank all the members who have provided comment on the bus routes listed in the email discussion list. All the feedback that members have given has been incorporated into a written submission for the review.

We will be attending the second level workshop where the department will display the proposed changes and solicit feedback on the plan. We look forward to seeing what will be proposed. Along with these reviews and the roll out of uniform bus operating hours, Melbourne's long suffering and forgotten bus users might be finally getting the transport service that they deserve.

State buys back country rail network

The Bracks government has finally undone the worst example of the Kennett government's privatising of Victoria's rail system, and bought back the lease of the non-metropolitan rail track for just under \$134 million. In 1999 the Kennett government sold V/Line Freight to RailAmerica (trading as Freight Australia) for \$240 million. This included a 45-year lease on the non-metropolitan track.

Freight Australia, and later Pacific National, used this monopoly of Victoria's broad gauge country rail lines to lock out any competing operators. The private operator also allowed the overall condition of the track to deteriorate, especially if it felt that there was insufficient traffic offering. The Portland line was even totally closed for a few months by Pacific National when the drought led to a significant drop in wheat traffic.

How useful the government's resumption of the management of country rail lines will be depends very much on how much money it is prepared to commit to upgrading the deteriorated tracks.

Government-owned V/Line will now be responsible for the regional rail infrastructure, and one of its first tasks will be to conduct a full audit of the regional rail network.

\$25 million has already been promised to upgrade the line to Mildura, but over a total distance of 500 kilometres that will only pay for some sleeper replacement and other minor works. The line must be brought back up to freight train standard of 80 km/h.

It is also essential that the government re-commits to its program of converting most non-metropolitan tracks to standard gauge. This project, announced in

2001, was to have been finished by the end of 2005, but no work at all has been done.

As it stands, Victoria's country freight railways suffer from all the negative effects of having a two incompatible railway gauges. In particular, it greatly reduces rail's ability to compete with the "seamless" network that road transport can offer. Another major problem is the inefficiencies and higher costs arising from the need to double-handle freight, especially grain.

The government has tended to blame Freight Australia, and then Pacific National, for their lack of co-operation with the project. That excuse for inaction is no longer tenable.

Geelong going backwards on bus patronage

The Geelong Branch has been very concerned to discover, in a leaked document from the Department of Infrastructure (DOI), that patronage on Geelong's urban bus system is actually declining, unlike other major regional centres such as Ballarat and Bendigo. This crisis is no doubt contributed to by continued inaction by the DOI and the City of Greater Geelong in reinstating a central Geelong bus interchange since the end of the major road works in Moorabool Street.

We are disturbed that not only is there little advocacy for public transport coming from Geelong Council, but that there is actually some opposition to it. One senior officer told us that he would strongly support any city trader who objected to having a bus stop outside his premises.

The Branch has just finished a month-long process of meeting all seven local state MPs. Discussion mainly concerned the decline in Geelong bus patronage and the lack of action in returning an effective bus interchange to the central city,

bus route reform and overcrowding on V/Line services.

We gave all MPs a draft of our ten-point "Agenda for Geelong's Public Transport", as well as our proposal for the establishment of a Geelong Regional Public Transport Authority, along the lines of Metlink, but also with responsibility for planning local public transport services. Both documents can be seen on the Geelong page of the PTUA website.

⇒ www.ptua.org.au/geelong

Southeast branch focuses on trains

One of the TTA/PTUA's earliest members, Ken McIntyre, has been attending branch meetings every month. Ken was secretary of the PTUA through much of the 1980s.

Our guest speaker recently was Ross Fox, Liberal candidate for the Federal seat of Isaacs. He has challenged Lynne Kosky to ride a peak hour train between Dandenong and the City with him.

The branch is working on getting Noble Park station staffed, and hope the council and local police will support our campaigning.

Why the minister must reconsider privatisation

In the past few months, the issue of public transport privatisation has become prominent in the media. Since the media thrive on antagonism, much of the attention has focussed on the adversarial drama played out between privatisation supporters and opponents.

Notably, with the obvious exception of the private operators themselves, the main supporters of privatisation have been members of the Victorian Government, while the opponents are a diverse group of academics, commentators, activists and ordinary letter-writing citizens. Privatisation as-we-know-it is quite clearly on the nose in Melbourne: 83% of respondents to an Age poll said that public transport should not remain privatised. (And the 6,000 responses to this question make it one of the Age's most popular polls.)

On the face of it, this gives strength to the argument made by Paul Mees and three other urban planning academics last year - that the bureaucracy under former Minister Peter Batchelor was 'captured' by the private operators and now devotes its energy to managing the public on behalf of the operators, rather than managing the operators on behalf of the public interest. It seems to us that those in the government who dispute this view have a case to answer.

Unfortunately, the focus on theatrics also tends to obscure some important facts about the nature of our privatised arrangements. Importantly, there is more to Melbourne's privatisation than merely the involvement of private operators - even in our 'model' cities of Zurich and Vancouver, the private sector helps run services. What makes ours a 'privatised' system is that ours is based on the UK-style 'franchising' model, where the private operator doesn't just run the services but also has a lot of control over planning

decisions. Typically, decisions and plans on everything from new timetables to the abolition of tram stops are worked out in secret between the operator, the bureaucracy and other private interests, and then presented to the public as a *fait accompli*. This has happened time and time again, demonstrating that even when a decision is formally the government's and not the operator's to make, it is the operator rather than the public that gets treated as the primary 'stakeholder' in these decisions.

The approach that succeeds in Zurich, Vancouver and Perth is quite different. It is based on 'subcontracting' with operators rather than 'franchising'. In these systems it is clear who does what: the operators run trains, trams and buses, while an autonomous public agency carries out all the tasks necessary to knit this plethora of vehicles and drivers and tracks into a coordinated, multimodal network that serves the public. Tasks such as the production of coordinated timetables, forward planning, traffic priority, infrastructure design, fare collection and distribution, passenger information, and marketing the multimodal 'brand' are carried out by the public agency in the public interest.

In Melbourne these vital tasks are left, officially or unofficially, to private operators to carry out according to the interests of absentee shareholders - which essentially means providing the cheapest acceptable level of service in return for the highest subsidy they can negotiate, while passing as many costs as possible onto the government and onto passengers. In a system based on subcontracting there is less opportunity for the private operator to 'game the regulator' in this way, simply because the operator is given less control. Operators provide the vehicles and drivers, but the public

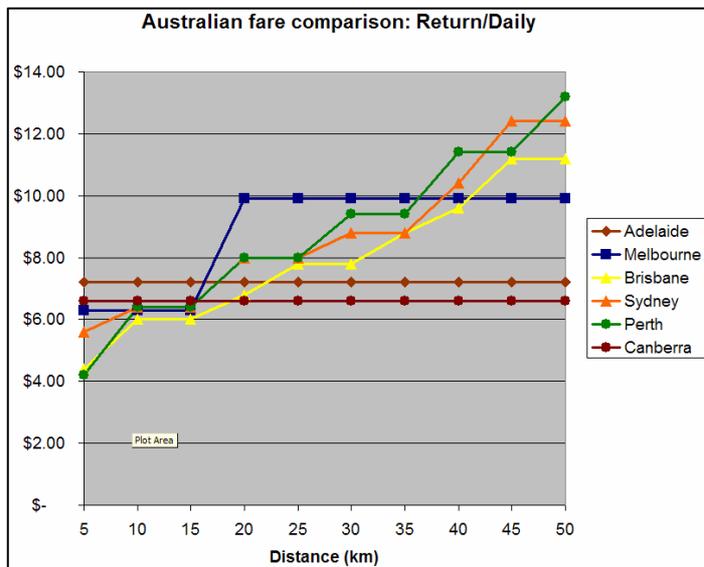
agency determines when and where they run and for what cost.

The current franchise contracts with Connex and Yarra Trams expire naturally on 30 November 2008, unless the Minister declares by 30 November this year that the franchises will be renewed. Should the franchises expire, the State Government gets the trains and trams back for minimal cost. It could then hand them over to a new public transport agency with similar status to VicRoads, which could subcontract them to the existing or new private operators, or set up public entities to run them. The worst possible outcome is that the existing franchises simply get renewed - we would then suffer more years of the current Balkanised, inconvenient and unreliable status quo.

Our new Minister says she doesn't want to run the trains and trams herself - and she doesn't have to. What she must do, however, is find people with the expertise to run them in a coordinated manner, and to safeguard the public interest while the operators pursue their own. Whether or not Connex and Yarra Trams remain in Melbourne, the 'privatisation' (franchising) model must be discarded as a failed experiment, and replaced with a subcontracting model such as Perth now has. We would then finally have a body charged with expanding public transport patronage, with the same level of attention as VicRoads devotes to the road network. With that in place, so much else becomes possible - there would for the first time be someone in the government lobbying for rail extensions, for genuine tram and bus priority, and for higher service frequencies.

That is why we have to reconsider privatisation, and why without doing so we cannot hope to make any progress toward a 20% mode share target.

Melbourne's fares highest in the country (cont'd from page 1)



The PTUA is of the view that Melbourne's fares should drop. Zone 1 fares should be brought down in cost to be equal to Zone 2 fares and the cost of zone 1-2 tickets should be no more than 50%

higher than the cost of a single zone ticket. Also, the zone boundary overlap should be made bigger to ensure that relatively short trips such as Camberwell to Box Hill aren't two zones.

We are also considering the merits of a proposal to make all trams and buses (except Eastern Freeway routes) zone-free; that is any zone ticket is valid, with a single zone fare being charged. This would avoid the expected chaos under the new "Myki" smartcard ticketing, when users will have to scan off as they exit from trams and buses. It would also rid the zone system of current anomalies such as buses being "out of zone" to the railway stations they connect to, and encourage use of bus and tram feeder services.

To see all the figures, check our web site:

⇒ www.ptua.org.au/melbourne/fare-comparison

See also:

⇒ www.ptua.org.au/policy/fares

Transport ignored in climate change debate

In the last PTUA News, we noted that climate change has entered the mainstream public consciousness as an issue of concern, and looks set to be a major issue in the federal election due later this year. On the night of the 2006 State Election, Premier Bracks noted the importance of the climate change issue in his victory speech.

Unfortunately, we also noted that virtually all the attention from the media and politicians (with the notable exception of Greens Senator Christine Milne) and most stakeholders have been focussed on electricity generation. While it is true that this is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions (particularly in Victoria, where most electricity comes from brown coal), emissions from the transport sector are in second place and are also the fastest growing.

One high-profile initiative is the phase-out of incandescent light bulbs in favour of lower-energy compact fluoros. While electricity-

saving initiatives like this, together with building design improvements and the commercialisation and rollout of renewable power generation is vital, it is important to remember that almost half of the average household's greenhouse emissions are from transport, while only a single-digit percentage are from lighting.

In the federal budget, Treasurer Peter Costello announced a programme to discourage land clearing in the developing world and a doubling of the existing rebate for homeowners to install solar panels as the only new climate change mitigation initiatives.

Unfortunately, in the transport portfolio, the budget was actively counterproductive insofar as it allocated \$22 billion for new infrastructure, mostly roads. The interstate rail network will receive some much-needed attention, but urban public transport was not allocated one cent.

And there was no change to the (somewhat perverse) Fringe Benefits Tax laws which actively encourage greater use of cars.

If Australia is serious about preventing dangerous climate change, a very substantial mode shift to public transport will be required. This will require appropriate investment in urban, country and interstate rail networks, more vehicles (designed and purchased with energy efficiency in mind), and progressive conversion of the bus fleet to cleaner fuels such as natural gas.

These initiatives would serve the dual purposes of slashing carbon emissions and ensuring Australia is better positioned to adjust to peak oil. Despite some worthwhile initiatives, the State and Federal budgets both contain a trainload of missed opportunities, meaning another year must pass before serious progress is made.

State budget focus: Public transport mode share

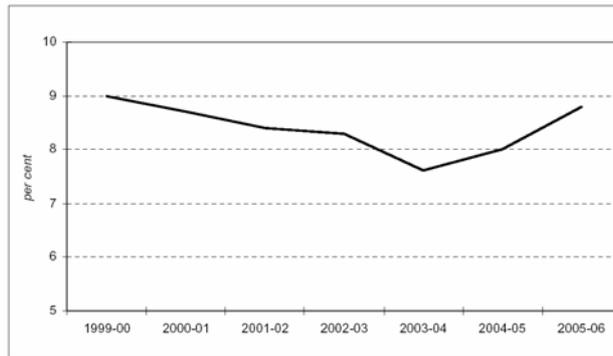
For some time, annual budget papers have included a section summarising progress toward the government's 'Growing Victoria Together' goals, including that of 20% of Melbourne's motorised trips on public transport by 2020.

In recent years, Budget papers suggested that mode share was slowly increasing, and the 2002 baseline figure for mode share got an optimistic revision: from 9% to 11%, because they changed from counting all trips to weekday trips only – misleading at best.

However, this year's budget is the first to actually chart mode share since 1999, showing figures running contrary to earlier claims, vindicating some of our suspicions.

In 1999-2000, according to these latest figures, mode share stood at 9% in line with earlier claims. But from there it steadily declined until at 2003-04 it stood at just 7.6 per cent. The figure for 2002 is about 8.3 per cent, which is an odd contrast to the heading at the top of the same page: "Public transport use in Melbourne as a proportion of

Chart B.14: Public transport use as a proportion of trips taken by motorised means in Melbourne^(a)



Source: Department of Infrastructure

trips taken by motorised means will increase from 11 per cent in 2002 to 20 per cent by 2020."

The graph shows that since 2004, mode share increased again: up to 8.8 per cent in 2005-06. Of course, we know the reason why: higher petrol prices have led people both to drive less, and to use public transport more instead of driving. The increase in mode share is as much due to the reduction in car use as to increased public transport use: if car use trends had continued as before, even the 12% increase in public transport use since 2004 would have left mode share steady at 7.6% between 2004 and 2006.

While it is good to see public transport mode share increasing at last, it is sobering to see that even with the effect of high petrol prices, mode share is still less than it was in the Bracks Government's first year of office. It also appears that mode share would still be on a declining trend but for high oil prices, something for which the government is not responsible.

The positive side of the recent trend is that the Bracks Government has an opportunity to 'lock in' the rise in public transport use, to retain the passengers it has gained from an increasingly expensive car alternative rather than see them abandon public transport once again should the oil price fall in the future. The key to this is management change to establish a success-oriented culture and to put planning in the hands of an independent public body. This, as we have explained, will be a main campaign focus for the PTUA in the coming year.

State budget re-hashes MOTC

While the state budget, handed down on 1st of May, included some welcome announcements, there were few surprises and little that deviated from last year's disappointing Meeting Our Transport Challenges (MOTC) statement.

Apart from the 10 extra suburban trains (see page 1), MOTC initiatives to be funded in this budget include three new premium stations, duplicating the railway line between Clifton Hill and Westgarth (\$48m), upgrading the Mildura line for freight services (\$53m), and upgrading facilities at Frankston, Broadmeadows, Preston and Coburg stations (\$20.5m).

And there will be more train stabling and improved station facilities at Cranbourne. The PTUA welcomes measures such as this, duplication of single track sections of the line and simplification of complex timetable patterns ahead of more costly and disruptive measures such as triplication.

Other spending included the abolition of zone 3 (\$21m p.a.), the regional rail buyback (\$133.8m; see page 4) a welcome \$25 million injection into rail freight network maintenance.

There will also be spending on the Transit Cities program at Footscray, Ringwood and Geelong.

The focus in this budget on MOTC and election commitments made last year is unsurprising, however it does raise doubts over the government's commitment to achieving their 20/2020 mode share target or to slowing the rapid growth in transport greenhouse emissions. We hope that increasing familiarity with the portfolio will allow Public Transport Minister Lynne Kosky to demonstrate greater vision next year.

More information:
⇒ www.budget.vic.gov.au

PTUA News

Newsletter of the Public Transport Users Association, Org. No. A-6256L
Print Post: Publication No. PP 331088/00009
If undeliverable, return to:
PTUA Office, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000

SURFACE
MAIL

POSTAGE
PAID
AUSTRALIA

Inside:

- Melbourne's fares the highest in the country
 - Time for action on suburban trains
- Why the minister must reconsider privatisation

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.
Or e-mail us at office@ptua.org.au

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.

PTUA office

247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne
Telephone (03) 9650 7898
e-mail: office@ptua.org.au

World Wide Web

Our web site is at www.ptua.org.au

Join us

If you are reading a friend's newsletter and would like to join, call the office, or see www.ptua.org.au/join/