

Brumby's grand plan:



122 km of new motorways



36 km of new railways



0 km of new tram lines

No Doncaster rail: more buses instead ... Half a rail tunnel ... Rail cost blowouts ... Smartbus network cut back ... Green wedge “missing link” freeway ... Hoddle Street freeway ... East-West Road Tunnel Stage One ... **Details pages 4-6**

Keeping in touch...

PTUA office

Ross House,
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. Members can also view archived newsletters online:

www.ptua.org.au/members/resources

Committee

Daniel Bowen – President
Tim Petersen – Vice President
Anthony Morton – Secretary
Kerryn Wilmot – Treasurer

Mark Johnson
Jason King
Tim Long
Rob Meredith
Bronwen Merner
Fiona Rae
David Robertson
Vaughan Williams

Branch convenors:

Paul Westcott – Geelong
Jeremy Lunn – Outer East

Committee members can be emailed using the format:
firstname.lastname@ptua.org.au

Committee Meetings

Meetings are usually on the fourth Thursday of each month at Ross House. Members are welcome to observe. Please call or e-mail the office for details.

Branch meetings

Outer East:

Third Tuesday of every month, 7pm
“The Barn” (behind Box Hill Baptist Church)
3 Ellingworth Parade (off Station St)
Box Hill

Geelong:

First Saturday of every month (except Jan), 10:30am
Multimedia Room, Courthouse
Youth Arts Centre
Corner Gheringhap and Little Malop Streets, Geelong

Annual General Meeting report

This year saw an impressive number of nominations for the PTUA Committee, with an election held, and secretary-cum-returning officer Tony Morton given plenty of work to do. We extend a warm welcome to our newest Committee member Fiona Rae. We also give thanks to departing Committee members Phil Bourke, Karl Tracksdorf, Anthony Pitt and Justine Webse, who we hope will maintain strong links with the

organisation. We remind everyone too that formal membership of the Committee is not a prerequisite for being active in the PTUA.

The AGM also passed a number of Constitutional amendments. These were to give effect to the 2007 AGM's resolution to strengthen our Constitution to protect the PTUA's political independence and avoid conflicts of interest, while recognising the valuable contributions of Committee

members who have also been members of political parties. All the amendments passed without dissent.

Long-serving office volunteer Peter Waters was appointed a life member at the meeting. Full minutes of the AGM, including the wording of resolutions, were distributed via the PTUA Member News email bulletin, and are available to members by contacting the office.

Rudd squibs on emissions target

As we go to press we learn of Kevin Rudd's woeful 5% by 2020 reduction target for carbon emissions, a sure sign that our new Federal Government has only taken 12 months to be housetrained by the

coal-and-oil lobby. The White Paper, like the Green Paper and Garnaut Review that preceded it, is distressingly short on understanding of sustainable solutions to reducing the 15% of emissions (and 50% of

household emissions) due to transport. This leaves us with no shortage of work to do at the Federal level between now and the next elections.

Copy deadline for the next PTUA news is 30th January 2009

Newsletter contributors: Daniel Bowen, Jeremy Lunn, Tony Morton, Paul Westcott.

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Metcard changes rolled back

In the last *PTUA News*, we highlighted a government decision in September to remove the zone benefit from periodical Metcards. At present, all Weekly and longer Metcard tickets can be used in both Melbourne zones on weekends, even if the user has only paid for a single zone.

This encourages use of public transport on the weekends – particularly for zone 1 ticketholders

to use zone 2 services, which generally have spare capacity at these times.

The government had planned to remove this benefit from January 2009, seemingly to simplify ticket rules to make it easier to implement Myki.

We were pleased to hear on December 12th that the government backed down from this illogical decision, which would have

penalised many of Melbourne's most loyal public transport users.

Along with the change of heart that is keeping Seniors Dailies available individually, this is a sensible decision by Minister Kosky. Public transport ticketing policy should be designed around passengers, not to make implementation of the ill-fated Myki system easier.

Fare rises – Melbourne's fares still the most expensive

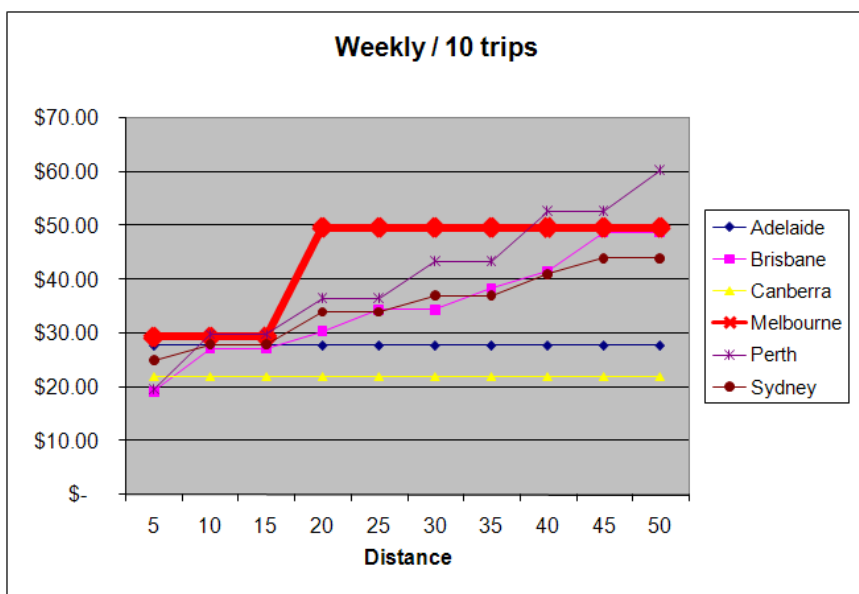
With a 5% increase in fares from January 1st, Melbourne will maintain its position of having the most expensive public transport fares in Australia, for most journeys.

While Adelaide is generally more expensive for trips under 15km, thanks to its single zone flat fares, for the bulk of trips up to 40km, Melbourne remains the most expensive for single trips, return/daily fares, and weekly tickets (or 10 trips).

Trips into the CBD longer than 40km are more expensive in some other cities, thanks to the removal of Melbourne's zone 3 in 2007.

The projects in the Victorian Transport Plan are to be partially funded by 5% above-CPI fare rises starting in 2012, which will put Melbourne's fares well above those of the other cities.

When questioned on this by the media, Public Transport Minister



Lynne Kosky said the PTUA's claim was "just wrong"^[1] – but the figures speak for themselves – see the graph here showing Weekly fares.

We've highlighted the Melbourne figures with a thicker line to make it easier to see in our black and white printed newsletter, but you can see

the all graphs in colour on our web site.

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

^[1] *The Age*, 10th December 2008, Marc Moncrief: "Brumby Fluffs, Kosky Follows"

Frank Crean 1916-2008

We note the passing of Frank Crean on 2nd of December.

Frank was a patron of the PTUA from 1989, and participated in a number of PTUA events along with our other patrons, Winsome

McCaughey, Sir Rupert Hamer and Dame Phyllis Frost. We offer our condolences to the Crean family.

(Picture: Frank Crean at a PTUA press conference. *The Age*, 5/6/1989)



Brumby's grand plan (cont'd from page 1)

The Victorian government finally released its grand vision for public transport on Monday, December 8th. Coming in at a grand total of some \$38 billion, one might imagine that once implemented it would leave Melbourne (and Victoria) with the best transport system in the world. Sadly it falls well short.

While there are some welcome public transport upgrades, including the long-overdue South Morang rail extension, as well as extending suburban trains to Sunbury, Melton and Cranbourne East, these come with astronomical price tags attached. The Tarneit rail line, now called the Regional Rail Link, and including tracks all the way into the city, comes in at a massive \$4 billion. And the first half of the city rail tunnel proposed by Eddington will cost \$4.9 billion.

So while nobody can deny a lot of money will be spent on public transport, the outcomes for many of these projects are unclear. We have consistently argued that there is a lot of scope to boost CBD rail capacity with operational changes, such as running more trains direct to Flinders Street, before spending billions on rail tunnels. And while one can understand the theory of the Regional Rail Link to speed up V/Line services, the route via Tarneit means it is questionable whether Geelong passengers will actually save any time at all -- let alone if those trains have to stop to pick up passengers on the way through.

The massive rail projects will suck up funds while Melburnians in bus-only suburbs will see few upgrades to their local services. Most car-dependent residents will find that their only nearby public transport service will continue to be a bus route running only every 30 to 60 minutes, with most stopping by 9pm at night.

There will be no tram extensions at all, and the "blue orbital" Smartbus project has been shelved. Although it is true much of the route parallels rail lines, at least a truncated version of the route should have been upgraded.

Most of the other planned Smartbus routes will be rolled-out, with the exception of the Green Orbital, which has been shortened.

But the vast majority of the bus network will continue to have infrequent services. While Doncaster has missed out on rail, upgraded "Doncaster Area Rapid Transit" freeway bus services will be implemented.

The flip side of the transport plan is a big programme of motorway construction. Virtually every freeway link the roads lobby has been arguing for is in here, including some that haven't been on the table before. The so-called "missing link" motorway which will plough through the Yarra Flats is included, as is the Frankston Freeway (now the "Peninsula Link"), a proposal for a pseudo-freeway along Hoddle Street that will chop Collingwood in two, and investigation into a massive Outer Ring Road which if ever built would be over 70 kilometres long.

Under the "salami tactics" category comes a road tunnel under Footscray to the docks (but which will result in a number of homes in West Footscray being bulldozed), which is really the first stage of Eddington's East-West tunnel. Likewise the Dingley Arterial Road, which will link the Westall Bypass pseudo-freeway to the Dandenong Bypass, and pave the way to a later connection to the South Road Extension pseudo-freeway.

In total the new motorways come to 122 kilometres (excluding widening projects), with the new railways just 36 kilometres (excluding track

amplification, which for instance accounts for half of the Regional Rail Link).

Once again the government may claim balance, but the real truth is anything but, and while the Premier claims the transport plan is "transformational", it appears what it will continue to transform Melbourne into is another car-dominated city like Detroit or Los Angeles.

Official Victorian Transport Plan web site

⇒www4.transport.vic.gov.au/vtp

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Many bus routes will remain hourly in the evenings and on weekends.

Even the good things fall short

Unfortunately even the most welcome projects in the Victorian Transport Plan fall short.

The South Morang rail project, effectively un-breaking a Labor promise from 1999, is no longer enough to reach the outer-limits of suburbia. As highlighted by South Morang Rail Alliance's Darren Peters in the last *PTUA News*, to properly serve the suburbs beyond Epping, the railway should continue

north along the old train line alignment to Mernda, closer to the Urban Growth Boundary.

Likewise, recent changes to the Urban Growth Boundary mean that soon, Cranbourne East will not be far enough. The Cranbourne line should instead be extended to Clyde, a few kilometres further down the Leongatha line, to keep pace with development.

The danger with some of these projects is that later extensions to properly serve these new residential areas will undoubtedly wait many more years – meaning travel patterns once again get established before the provision of any quality public transport. And, as has happened with Coolaroo Station on the Craigieburn line (see below), the later projects will be unnecessarily expensive.

How much can a rail line cost?

In 2002 the Sydenham rail electrification project opened, at a cost of \$44 million for 5.4 kilometres. It included a brand new station at Sydenham with stabling, and a new station at Keilor Plains.

So why in 2008 is it expected that the 4 kilometre South Morang rail extension, which will mostly use an existing track alignment, will cost a huge \$650 million? Even given the cost includes duplication between Keon Park and Epping, this inflated cost is staggering, particularly as a 2003 report commissioned for the Department of Infrastructure put the cost at just \$18 million, plus \$26.5 million for the duplication.

Similarly, the Regional Rail Link proposal (including the Tarneit line) will include around 40 kilometres of new track, about half of which is across empty land on Melbourne's western fringe, but will cost \$4 billion.

Contrast to Perth, where the Mandurah line, which opened last year, includes 70 kilometres of track, some down the middle of an established freeway, with sections underground, and cost \$1.7 billion.

While they may make the Victorian Transport Plan's spending on public transport versus roads almost look balanced, the costings coming out of the Department of Transport are doing sustainable transport

advocates no favours at all, and there is an urgent need to find out what's going wrong. Is there really a 500% mismanagement premium, or is something else afoot?

Lack of forward planning certainly plays a part.

When the Craigieburn electrification project was done, the design for Craigieburn station was compromised, and is now being revisited with a further package of works.

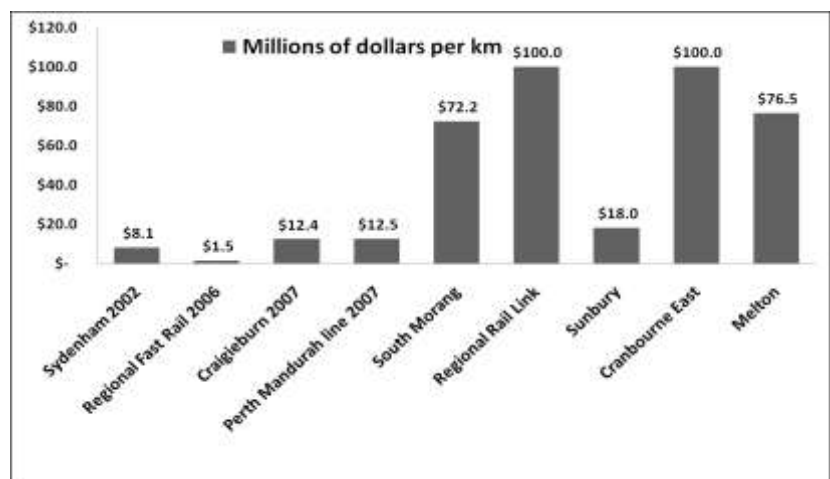
And while at the time Coolaroo station was not included in the project, one might have expected that provision would be made in the track design to easily build it in the future. But it wasn't, and in fact we understand tracks and overhead wiring are having to be moved to cater for the new station, helping to add to the cost of \$33 million for

this one station alone.

Likewise, for the Regional Fast Rail project the government ignored calls to use gauge convertible sleepers, which for a trivial extra cost would have made future gauge standardisation much cheaper.

The graph below compares the per kilometre costs of various recent and railway projects. Obviously each project is different in its scope and details, but the varying costs are astounding. (We've deliberately left the Footscray to Domain rail tunnel off the graph – it comes out at a massive \$490 million per kilometre.)

With railways in other parts of the country (and indeed in Victoria's recent history) being built for much less money, the government needs to urgently review why Victorian projects are costing so much.



Ivanhoe byelection coming?

The Victorian Transport Plan includes the so-called 'Missing Link' motorway through the Yarra Valley green wedge - the same one the government has repeatedly denied considering.

In announcing the link, the government has inadvertently confirmed the Federal Court's finding in an environmental challenge to the Scoresby Freeway (now Eastlink) in 2003: that the green wedge link was a "highly likely" consequence of building Eastlink.

In 2001 then Transport Minister Peter Batchelor stated in Parliament that the road was "not on our radar" and alleged it was merely a PTUA

conspiracy theory. The local Labor MP for Ivanhoe, Craig Langdon, likewise declared in a 2002 public meeting that the road would never go ahead while he was in Parliament and that if it did, he would resign. Since Mr Langdon is still the Member for Ivanhoe, we wonder if there is a byelection in the offing.

Perhaps the most dishonest aspect of this 'North East Link' proposal is the suggestion that the most sensitive section - through the listed Bolin Bolin wetlands, Heide Gallery and homes in Heidelberg - would all be underground. Those who live next to the vent stacks for the Mullum Mullum Tunnel know that you can't simply bury the

environmental impact of a major road. But a tunnel through this entire area also appears as a geographical impossibility. Greensborough Road is close to the highest point in the Melbourne urban area, and from here the tunnel must drop many tens of metres under the steep Heidelberg hillside to the level of the Yarra River, then supposedly dive underneath. There is little chance the heavy freight trucks imagined as the road's key users would be able to drive the grade. Expect, then, to see the 'tunnel' become a surface road across the Yarra once it's too late to reverse the decision.

Outer east: Reaction to the plan

The fact that John Brumby's Transport Plan has failed to address the real issue in Melbourne's Outer East, the lack of public transport, might be stating the obvious.

If it isn't enough that Eastlink has already proven a non-solution to our transport woes, the Brumby Government has unfortunately decided that we need a few more Eastlinks rather than addressing the core issue. As the plan surely cannot be the real solution, we look

forward to the announcement of Doncaster and Rowville railway lines, along with buses every 10 minutes in the next transport plan in 2010!

The branch's campaign for upgraded evening trains has, however, been met with limited success with three extra trains between the city and Ringwood, after 8:30pm. This is only the tip of the iceberg and the campaign for

better off-peak services will continue.

The next twelve months will be a big year for the branch as we build the foundations for the 2010 election year. We call on all Outer East members to get involved to ensure that the real issue in transport are addressed this time round.

⇒ www.ptua.org.au/outereast

Response to the Plan in 200 words

The PTUA was asked by *The Age* to respond to the plan in two hundred words or less. This was our response:

Little difference for most Melburnians

TWO-AND-A-HALF years ago, the government issued *Meeting Our Transport Challenges*, its long-term vision for Melbourne's transport system.

That document is now in tatters, replaced by the new transport plan.

While some communities will welcome new and improved train services, and CBD commuters will see some relief from overcrowding (albeit at enormous cost), for most car-dependent Melburnians who live in bus-only suburbs and rarely travel into the CBD, this plan will make little difference, despite the vast amount of money to be spent.

Public transport is lacking in many areas but the plan includes funding and studies for more than 100 kilometres of new motorways in the

misguided belief that these will relieve traffic congestion.

We had hopes that this plan would bring quality public transport to all of Melbourne, not just those lucky enough to live near tram, train and Smartbus routes. We had hopes that more Melburnians would finally get real transport choices, so they could leave their cars at home. On these points, this plan, like its predecessor, is a failure.

Geelong Branch: Bus interchange saga, and Myki

For a couple of days it seemed that there might be a resolution to the four year old saga about deciding on a site for Geelong's central bus interchange. Council officers prepared a briefing paper for Council recommending a location in Malop Street, between the Moorabool Street intersection and the pedestrian crossing to Westfield. However the recommendation was quickly pulled by senior managers, who said that the quality of the supporting material was unsatisfactory.

While the Malop Street location is certainly adequate, the Department of Transport, the two local bus companies and the Branch, want the

exchange to be in Moorabool Street because it is a lot better operationally. The DoT estimates that the Malop Street site will cost \$500,000 more a year to use than the Moorabool Street location.

The state government's Victorian Transport Plan promises \$80 million to institute the reforms to Geelong's bus system recommended by Parsons Brinckerhoff a year ago. However nothing can usefully be done until the central interchange site is agreed on, and now that won't be until next year at least.

In the meantime a Myki trial involving an unknown number of real passengers was conducted in

great secrecy on some Bellarine Peninsula buses. Our member triallist had to sign a confidentiality agreement before being allowed to participate. All we know is that the trial took place and that the Myki ticket was handed back at the end of the period.

The Myki website now says that Myki can now be used on four Bellarine Peninsula bus routes, but cards can only be obtained on buses from roaming "Myki mates" (Myki customer service teams). None had been sighted before going to press.

⇒ www.ptua.org.au/geelong

North American delegation visits Melbourne

On 23rd October PTUA President Daniel Bowen met with a visiting delegation of US public transport officials on a study tour organised by the Transit Cooperative Research Program, part of the Eno Transportation Foundation based in Washington DC.

The tour's focus was "Balancing Infrastructure Reinvestment with System Expansion", and was visiting most major cities in Australia. While in Melbourne they were also meeting with the Department of Transport, Yarra Trams and Connex.

During a wide-ranging discussion covering some of the challenges

facing Melbourne's public transport system, Daniel highlighted the PTUA's role in lobbying at a time when demand for improved services is increasing, but government provision is not keeping up.

Many North American cities have similar challenges, with recent higher petrol prices leading to increased demand for public transport.

The additional challenge for many cities is decreased funding due to the current financial crisis, with North American city government revenue dropping markedly – not really an issue here, where there seems to be plenty of roads funding

which could be diverted into more sustainable transport.

Other topics raised included Federal funding, urban planning, and the role of passenger lobby groups. Study team leader Karen King of Golden Empire Transit in Bakersfield, California noted that such groups are comparatively rare in the USA: transit issues are more commonly raised there by environmental and social equity advocates. The team took the view that groups dedicated to public transport are important to keep up the pressure for investment and improved services.

⇒ www.enotrans.com

Vroom-vroom Doyle takes Clown Hall

Many Melbourne residents (whose votes play little part in determining the election outcome in the City of Melbourne) are fuming at Robert Doyle's plan to return cars to Swanston Street full-time. The plan would either narrow the footpath and sacrifice mature plane trees, or else interfere fatally with the movement of 100,000 daily tram

passengers, or perhaps both. All for the benefit of a minority of motorists, who make up just a small proportion of the 15% of all CBD travellers who come by car. It is such a patently bad idea that even the RACV has come out against it, alongside the State Government, Yarra Trams, Bicycle Victoria, the PTUA and other groups. Indications

are that this is just the latest, way-past-its-prime round of the fight initiated by previous Lord Mayors Peter Costigan and John So. But despite the widespread opposition, we should not be complacent - crazier things have happened in Melbourne after all.

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Inside:

- Brumby's grand transport plan disappoints
 - Metcard changes rolled back

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PTUA office

247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne
Telephone (03) 9650 7898
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Responsibility for electoral comment in PTUA News is taken by Vaughan Williams, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne.