



## New train / tram contracts signed: Where's the fine print?

As reported in the previous *PTUA News*, it seemed all but certain that multinational companies Metro Trains Melbourne (MTM) and KeolisDownerEDI would take over running Melbourne's trains and trams. Official confirmation came on 1 September, with the government's announcement that the new operators will take over from the end of November, coupled with 'aspirational' assurances of improved services.

As had been speculated, the trains will be run under the name *Metro*. Trams will retain the *Yarra Trams* name, though they will get new logos.

Both companies have promised more reliable services, better punctuality, cleaner stations and vehicles. MTM said 22 stations would gain staff and the troublesome Comeng train air-conditioners would be upgraded. KDR said trams would be upgraded and refurbished. And the government chimed in, proclaiming that "passengers were the big winners".

But amongst the noise from multiple spin machines whirring away, there was actually very little detail, particularly considering the multi-billion dollar cost of the new contracts.

It is not clear how many new services will be provided, and when. It is not clear how the tram operator intends to improve punctuality.

Neither do we know yet which 22 stations will be upgraded to have staff, and whether those staff will be full-time or during peak hours only.

It's not clear how fare revenue will be split between the operators and the government—and whether the operators get the lion's share if patronage continues to grow, while taxpayers continue to fund the infrastructure and fleet expansion the operators will say is necessary to help the system cope with that growth.



As yet there seems to be no indication that the government will move to properly plan public transport and coordinate services so that buses, trains and trams meet properly at interchanges to form a single, cohesive network.

We can only hope this detail is released with all haste, so that people can judge for themselves whether the continued privatisation of trams and trains is really good value for the taxpayer.

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**Running like a Metro ⇒ Page 6**

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## Keeping in touch:

### PTUA Office

Ross House  
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Telephone (03) 9650 7898  
Email: [office@ptua.org.au](mailto:office@ptua.org.au)

### Membership Enquiries

Call or email the office (see above).

### Commuter Club

PTUA members can obtain cheap yearly Metcards. See [www.ptua.org.au/members/offers](http://www.ptua.org.au/members/offers).

### Internet

Our website is at [www.ptua.org.au](http://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. See: [www.ptua.org.au/members/resources](http://www.ptua.org.au/members/resources).

## Committee

Daniel Bowen—President  
Tim Petersen—Vice President  
Tony Morton—Secretary  
Kerryn Wilmot—Treasurer  
Myles Green  
Mark Johnson  
Jason King  
Tim Long  
Rob Meredith  
Bronwen Merner  
Fiona Rae  
David Robertson  
Vaughan Williams

### Branch convenors

Paul Westcott—Geelong  
Jeremy Lunn—Eastern Suburbs

### Contact

All committee members can be emailed using the format `firstname.lastname@ptua.org.au`.

## Member Meetings

### Melbourne

Second Monday of every month, 6pm  
Ross House  
247 Flinders Lane, City  
*More details: see below and opposite*

### Eastern Suburbs

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

## Notice of Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the PTUA will be held on **Monday 9 November at 6:30pm**, in the Hayden Raysmith Room, Level 4, Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane Melbourne.

The election procedure allows for the AGM to elect a President, Secretary and Treasurer and up to nine ordinary Committee members. Nominations must be on the form attached below (a photocopy is acceptable) and signed by the nominator and the candidate, both of whom must be current financial mem-

bers of the PTUA.

In accordance with new rules passed by the Association in 2008, to be eligible for election a candidate:

- must not be a sitting MP;
- must be a member of at least 12 months' standing, and not be a local councillor (unless the Committee waives this requirement); and
- must disclose to the Secretary if they are a member of an MP's or councillor's electoral staff, or a candidate for

election to political office. (General council employees are not considered to be directly employed by councillors, so will usually be exempt.)

Nominations must reach the PTUA Secretary by hand or by mail (Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000) by 4:00pm on Friday 30 October. Nominations will not be called for at the AGM unless nominations received by this closing date are insufficient to fill all positions.

### PTUA Committee Nomination Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ (nominator)

nominate \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ (candidate)

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

I declare that the candidate is not a current Member of Parliament; is / is not a Mayor, Councillor or equivalent office holder of a municipality; is / is not employed by a sitting MP or Local Councillor; and is / is not currently a candidate for a political office. (delete as appropriate)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (nominator) \_\_\_\_\_ (candidate) \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ (date)

## October members meeting: Meet the Myki mandarins

Our October members' meeting will feature staff from the Transport Ticketing Authority to answer members' questions about Victoria's new ticketing system.

The TTA have promised us a session which will focus on explaining the new system to members, and will (we hope) keep the propaganda to a minimum.

The meeting is on **Monday 12 October** at 6pm at Ross House. Mark this in your diary today!



Source: Australian Government Budget Overview, 2009

## PTUA meets Regional Rail Link team

**PTUA met with the 'project team' for the Regional Rail Link (RRL) on 21st August.**

The RRL is also known as the 'Tarnet Link' or the 'Regional Rail Express' (see above, from this year's Federal Budget Papers). It is the State Government's current showcase project for public transport infrastructure, having received \$3.2 billion in Federal funding.

In doing so the RRL may have set a new record for the shortest time between the first official canvassing of a major infrastructure project (in the Eddington Report of March 2008) and a funding announcement (May 2009, or just 14 months later). Until very recently it was unclear what route the line would take, and if it were to be an express route, an urban development corridor, or both.

At our meeting, it quickly became apparent that many of the issues we wished to discuss were not things the project team could answer, as they are responsible for delivering the infrastructure, whereas the Public Transport Division (PTD) are responsible for determining the services to be provided on the line.

Cory Hannett, Executive Director of

the RRL team, gave an undertaking to pass these queries on to the PTD team concerned and to seek answers from them. They included questions about timetabling and service patterns of Geelong and other trains, whether local Tarnet trains would be provided, and probable travel times.

The RRL team were able to tell us that the route of the line in the "greenfields" section (Deer Park to West Werribee) will be finalised later this year. Initially the new section of line will include two stations—Tarnet and Wyndham Vale—with future provision for others.

Detailed design has not yet been done to determine the future layout of major stations such as Sunshine and Footscray, but this work is likely to get underway soon. While the additional platforms at Southern Cross will be the first components completed, various parts of the overall project will be constructed concurrently, with the target for completion of the project being late 2014.

The PTUA will continue to seek answers to the key questions posed by this project:

- By how many minutes will travel time to Geelong increase via this line, given the \$69 million of sunk investment in reducing travel time by six minutes between 1999 and 2006?
- What form of service is envisaged for the large number of passengers travelling between Geelong and Werribee?
- Given the Tarnet area is to become an urban growth corridor, how will trains serve this area without incurring further delays for Geelong travellers?
- What is the actual capacity increase in trains per hour on the Werribee suburban line attributable to the RRL project?
- What proportion of V/Line trains will use the new route into Southern Cross, and will this be effective in removing conflicts with suburban trains?

It would appear to us very difficult to conduct any meaningful comparison of the RRL's costs and benefits without some kind of answer to these questions.

Stay tuned for further updates on this project as they come to hand.

## Myki update

**The Myki juggernaut rolls on, and the government are saying it will be switched on in Melbourne by the end of the year.**

While the PTUA has consistently said the huge amount of money involved would have been better spent on staff, services, tram/train extensions and extra vehicles, we now face the likely prospect that the system will be fully implemented in the near future.

So, what does this mean for passengers?

There will be three ways of using the Myki system.

The first is to **ignore** the re-usable plastic cards and buy only 'short-term' cardboard tickets each time you travel. These will be Daily or 2-hour, Adult or Concession, and available in all zones. Pricing will be the same as at present, for instance \$6.80 for a full-fare Zone 1 daily.

The second is to buy a plastic Myki card and pre-load money onto it, which you then use each time you travel. This is called '**Myki money**' and trips will be charged at the discounted rate, equivalent to using a 10 × 2 hour ticket, with a cap of two charges per day (as now)—for instance \$5.88 for a day in Zone 1. Travel on the weekend will be capped at the current Weekend Saver rate, for example \$3.00 for Zones 1 and 2.

The third is to use a plastic Myki card and load a '**Myki pass**' onto it. This can be a weekly, or any time period from 28 to 365 consecutive days. The pass is valid from the time of first use. The weekly pass pricing will be the same as now (\$29.40 for Zone 1). For longer periods the pricing will be similar to that used now for Monthlies and Yearlies.

*At the time of writing it is uncertain if the 'all zones in weekends' travel*

*benefit available with current periodical tickets will be retained. We will be watching this issue carefully: as recently as the 1990s, a periodical ticket entitled the bearer and their entire family to free travel on weekends, a loyalty benefit which has been steady eroded.*

A plastic Myki card can actually have a combination of a 'Myki pass' and 'Myki money'. The Myki pass would be used for regular travel, while the Myki money would be available for occasional trips outside the zone/s covered by the Myki pass.

The plastic Myki cards will not be free. The pricing will be \$10 full fare and \$7 concession. A range of people including Seniors Sunday pass holders will be posted free Myki cards. The cards will be able to go into negative balance to complete a trip, so the reasoning is that by charging for the card it will prevent people just throwing them away and getting a new one, thus avoiding the need to pay for travel.

For people switching to Myki early, there will be incentives to make getting a Myki cheaper or free. In the regional areas, the cards were initially offered for \$5, with \$5 of Myki money on them—so effectively free.



## How will you use Myki?

Passengers will be required to touch on, and off, on every trip. This is how the Myki system will work out if a Myki pass covers the trip, or if Myki money needs to be deducted from the card, and if so, how much.

The Transport Ticketing Authority has been studying the likely effect of this on passenger flows and vehicle speeds. In March it was revealed that studies, conducted in 2007, concluded that trams at busy stops would suffer extra delays. The TTA say they used this information to make adjustments to the location of scanners to improve boarding times.

Some delays were also seen initially in regional town buses, though our Geelong branch has concluded that the worst delays have dissipated as passengers have got used to the new system. (A few issues still remain, though: see our report on Page 6.)

And if you don't touch off? There will be a 'default fare' applied, which penalises you for not doing so. This is yet to be announced, but judging from the regional pricing, this is likely to be a minimal 20 cent charge for trams and buses operating in a single zone. The real 'hit' comes on the rail system or on multi-zone buses and trams (such as routes 75 and 86). On these routes, the default fare is likely to be the cost of travelling in two zones, *plus* the 20 cents.

## Want to know more?

In the next few weeks more information about the Myki rollout is expected to be made public.

Also, the Transport Ticketing Authority will be available at our Members Meeting at 6pm on Monday 12 October to answer your questions about Myki. See page 3 for further details.



## Privatisation just carries on regardless

As expected, the contracts with new private train and tram operators have now been signed. Nonetheless, our State Government insists they will remain 'commercial in confidence' at least until they commence at the end of November this year.

While we can't exclude the possibility of a radical change of heart among the State bureaucracy or the Minister's office, it seems all but certain the new operators are to inherit the same 'franchising' arrangements that are largely responsible for the poor record of our system in the past decade.

This latest privatisation deal is the third for Melbourne's trains and trams. The first one in 1999 came with huge promises of improved service and higher patronage, but collapsed within a few years; operators didn't plan new services and patronage stagnated.

The second, in 2004, managed to keep the remaining operators in Melbourne with higher subsidies and an above-inflation fare increase. Only afterward did something happen that the operators never saw coming. Patronage started to grow.

And on it grew: yet the operators still didn't plan for additional services. Connex started to blame its overcrowding problem on a lack of infrastructure, even though it was only running as many trains as ran in 1960 before the City Loop was built. Yarra Trams blamed its slow services on 'traffic congestion', despite its worst problems being in the inner city where trams are separated from cars, but must still face traffic lights programmed to favour cars.

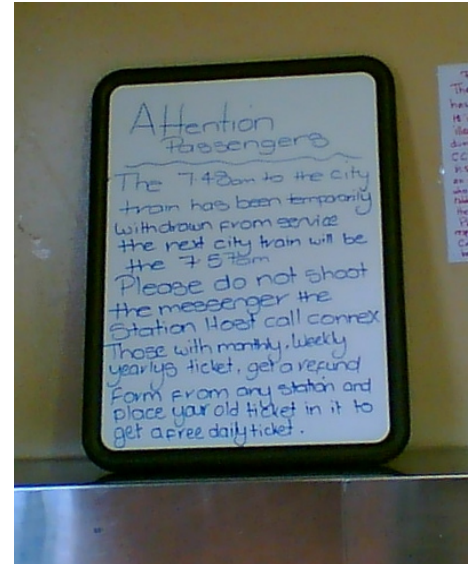
In each case the problem is the same: the private operator faces rising demand but finds reasons not to schedule additional services. At fault is the franchising system, which leaves decisions on service levels to the will of the private operator. To the financial engineers

who designed the system, it seemed evident the operator would have an incentive to boost services, increase patronage and make more money. But in the real world, we've seen the actual incentive is to 'sweat' the assets by running services at the bare minimum necessary for survival, and to blame the infrastructure when passengers complain. Perversely, this also suits a government that likes nothing better than to spend money on infrastructure.

This problem is hardly going to be solved just by wheeling in some new private operators with the same incentives. The only kind of contractual arrangement likely to work is one where decisions on service levels rest with an independent coordinator—one who is also empowered to manage the infrastructure and the traffic system in the public interest. The coordinator gives a schedule to the operator, who is then paid according to the service delivered. And because the same entity is in charge of the infrastructure and the schedule—with the expertise to manage both—there is little wiggle room for the operator to argue about what can and cannot be delivered.

This contracting model, based on a coordinating authority procuring tightly specified services from operators, is taken for granted in Europe. It is one that the new operators of our trains and trams will be familiar with.

Our franchising system, meanwhile, has been criticised in an OECD report as an example of how *not* to write contracts with transport operators. Our own Minister doubts that our system is cost-effective, but persists with it anyway, thanks to the relentless stream of advice from senior bureaucrats who are now among the world's sole champions of this failed approach. If only this real-world episode of *Yes Minister* were as funny as the fictional version.



Thankfully, the signing of new contracts has not closed the door on reforming the way public transport is run in Melbourne. Of course it's not as easy as before, when the opportunity existed to write new contracts from scratch. But it's still the case that the government is the party holding the purse strings, giving it substantial leverage; and an operator is likely to see some advantage in moving to a 'fee for service' model where there's a clear link between its operating costs and the payments it receives.

All this means that when it comes to making public transport work better, the chief obstacle is still a political one. It is likely that after a brief honeymoon period, the political problems for the government on public transport will resume—since the source of these problems has not gone away.

As long as public transport users make it clear they are fed up with overcrowding, unreliable service, poor attitudes and buck-passing, ultimately a current or future Transport Minister will have no choice but to reform the system.

## Geelong Branch report

### The bus route saga

At long last, the first stage of the new bus route structure for Geelong and the Bellarine has been introduced. Routes in the southern and south-eastern suburbs, previously the most incomprehensible of all, have been significantly simplified.

Unfortunately, however, service frequencies haven't been improved, and it's perhaps a reflection of the bizarre nature of the previous routes and timetables that parts of Grovedale now have a less frequent service than before.

In the fortnight before the change, almost all Geelong households had the new and improved Geelong bus timetable book delivered by Australia Post. It is now free (having previously had a cover charge of 50 cents) which means it will be much more widely available, for example from tourist information centres and the like.

### Let's see the contracts

As reported in the last newsletter, we have started a campaign to have local

bus contracts made public when they are renewed in July next year. Public disclosure is already the norm for the contracts with V/Line, Connex and Yarra Trams. Local MP Ian Trezise wrote to Lynne Kosky supporting our aims but received an evasive and non-committal response. He is going to write again. DLP MLC Peter Kavanagh also supports our campaign and has asked the minister a question-on-notice about the renewal of the contracts.

### Myki mayhem

Geelong public transport users have become familiar with Myki, but a number of problems remain. Perhaps the main one is that there remains no difference in the audible 'beep' whether a card scan is successful or unsuccessful. This has led to passengers inadvertently being charged more than they expect or should be.

Another weakness is that the type size of the "Fare deducted" and "Balance remaining" messages on the card reader screens is far too small. As well, it seems that over 30% of buses have one

or more inoperable card reader. We've been unsuccessful recently in trying to directly contact Gary Thwaites of the Transport Ticketing Authority about these difficulties.

### Other activities

The Branch made a submission to the Legislative Council Inquiry on Train Services, concentrating on V/Line services. A media release was issued to coincide with the submission, noting the continuing lack of detail about the configuration of the Regional Rail Link. In particular it asked how Lynne Kosky could make a prediction about the timings of trains using the line when so much still not known about it.

This resulted in an extraordinary attack on the Branch by Matt Phelan, DoT Director of Public Affairs who, in a letter to the editor of a local paper, dubbed us the "so-called" Public Transport Users Association.

**The PTUA Geelong Branch meets monthly in Geelong city; see Page 2 for details. Paul Westcott is the branch convenor.**



### If it's called a Metro, it should run like a Metro

The rebranding of Connex trains to 'Metro' is estimated to cost around \$15 million, but the brand name will be owned by the government, so hopefully this should be the last rebranding for some time.

But if the system is going to be called a Metro, it should run like a Metro. This doesn't mean building multi-billion-dollar tunnels, but it does mean running more frequent services all day, ev-

ery day, including evenings and weekends.

Running trains at least every 10 minutes is possible right now on most of the network, using the existing train fleet and capacity. It would help spread the peak load by cutting waiting times across the day, and encourage further patronage growth at the times when there is plenty of track capacity available—and currently wasted.

Accompanying this with a boost in arterial road bus and tram routes to match, providing services 'Every 10 Minutes to Everywhere' across Melbourne would make public transport the 'mode of choice' for more trips across the city, cutting traffic congestion and car dependence.

⇒ [www.ptua.org.au/campaigns/every10minutes](http://www.ptua.org.au/campaigns/every10minutes)

## Senate inquiry backs transport reforms

In late August, the Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee released its report on investment in public transport infrastructure and services. This was based on a wide ranging inquiry conducted earlier this year, for which the PTUA lodged a submission and attended hearings in Melbourne.

One of the key planning measures recommended by the PTUA and other transport experts is that the Federal Government fund urban public transport, but require State transport bureaucracies to reform their planning processes in order to receive funding.

The model for such processes, we and our allies suggested, was the WA Pub-

lic Transport Authority, better known as Transperth, which coordinates a multi-modal transport network with effective interchanges and an overriding concern for passenger outcomes. This measure, it turns out, has been taken up by the Senate committee in its report.

Among the statements in the Committee's report is that "Australian Government funding for transport initiatives should be conditional on reforms to state and territory transport and planning departments to create central coordinating agencies along the model of the Public Transport Authority of Western Australia."

In Perth between 1991 and 2006, the

number of journeys to work by public transport increased by over 60%; faster than in any other Australian capital city. Perth also increased its mode share for public transport journeys to work over this period, and it was the *only* Australian capital city to do so. In no other city has public transport use grown faster than car use, even with recent patronage growth in Melbourne and Perth's own history of car dependence.

The Senate report acknowledges that regardless of who runs the services, if they are not properly coordinated at a high level centrally, they will not provide people with the transport service they need.

### In brief. . .

#### **Manningham rejects flawed report on tram extension**

In their August meeting, Manningham City Council rejected a report from consultants GHD that suggested an extension of tram 48 from North Balwyn to Doncaster was not feasible.

Although the GHD study was technically quite sound, it relied on a number of questionable assumptions. Rather than consider a short extension to a logical terminus at Doncaster Shoppingtown (as has been PTUA policy for many years), the study considered a much longer extension to Donvale. It also assumed that trams and buses would require separate dedicated lanes

in Doncaster Road between the freeway and Shoppingtown—thus restricting car traffic to a single lane, unless the road were widened at great expense.

A further decision on whether to have GHD redo the study with different assumptions is pending.

#### **PTUA to address Upper House hearings**

PTUA office bearers Daniel Bowen and Tony Morton will appear before the Legislative Council in October, when it conducts hearings for its inquiry into the failure of Melbourne train services last summer.

Although the immediate cause of the failure was inappropriately specified

air conditioners on some of the older trains, we will also be highlighting the buck-passing between the government and the private operator that exacerbated the problems, and the delay before the government admitted responsibility for the issues with inadequate infrastructure.

In our view, the design of rolling stock to withstand extreme weather, and the contingency planning for periods when rolling stock is unavailable, are 'tactical planning' issues that should be managed by a centralised planning authority, to ensure they do not fall into the gap between governments concerned to minimise political damage, and operators concerned to minimise costs.

### **Copy deadline for the next PTUA News is 13 November 2009.**

Newsletter contributors: Tony Morton, Daniel Bowen, Paul Westcott and Tim Petersen.

Printed on recycled paper by Flash Print, Collingwood. Our thanks to Margaret Pullar and the dedicated mailout team.

Special thanks from Tony to outgoing editor Daniel Bowen who managed to get together eight pages of material five times a year for almost a decade from 2001. Daniel will be continuing in his Presidential role and as a contributor but has earned a well-deserved break from bi-monthly newsletter wrangling!

## 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

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### Inside . . .

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#### 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 email us: [office@ptua.org.au](mailto:office@ptua.org.au).

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#### Join us

If you are reading a friend's newsletter and would like to join and help the fight for better public transport, it's \$25 per year (\$12 concession). Call the office or see [www.ptua.org.au/join](http://www.ptua.org.au/join).

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