

Myki: the world post-Metcard

Since December 29th, we have been in a post-Metcard world, with Myki being the only ticket available (with a few exceptions) for public transport in Melbourne. For regulars, the transition has gone surprisingly smoothly, perhaps because the steady removal of Metcard meant most had already switched.

While many issues are likely to ease with the removal of Metcard consoles from trams and buses, it seems unlikely to fix all the problems. This removal is a slow process, and there is continuing confusion for occasional users. Some have been spotted, for instance, trying to touch their Myki cards at Metcard validators.

Many stations have had Metcard validators removed, but in some cases this and other work has occurred in peak hour, rendering some Myki equipment unavailable for use just when it was most needed.



While TTA/PTV has made an effort to ensure tram Metcard vending machines have signage indicating they are no longer in use, some notices have been vandalised or removed - in one case one was spotted stuck to the *outside* of a tram - see picture on this page.

Another Myki flaw: Compensation

With Metro missing its performance targets in November and December, another disadvantage of Myki has become apparent.

The compensation code says that 28+ day Myki Pass users can claim a free daily fare by filling in a form. We believe only around 5% of those eligible claim it - automatic compensation would be better, but until then we encourage claiming, as it helps send a message that things need to improve.

Under Metcard, a daily ticket was sent out, to claimants. Under Myki, a the Myki Money daily fare is credited to your card. You can use it for travel when your Pass expires, or into zones not covered by your Pass. You can also request it be credited to another card, which is helpful if you don't want to use it yourself.

But the compensation is at the fare rate of the month you are claiming for. Those with Zone 1 adult who claimed for November and December have received \$6.56 in compensation, but on January 1st the Zone 1 adult daily fare went up to \$7.

In other words, sometimes the compensation daily fare they pay you isn't actually worth a daily fare.



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

- Anthony Morton – President
Tim Long – Secretary
Phil Bourke – Treasurer

Daniel Bowen
Matthew Ferrantino
Ian Hundley
Terry Konstandelis
Paul Prentice
Nalla Sivarasa
Anthony Young
David Robertson

Branch convenors:

Paul Westcott – Geelong
Jeremy Lunn – Outer East

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 (see below for details)

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

PTUA members' meeting, 6 pm, Tuesday 26th March 2013

The 20 minute city - is this for real?

RMIT's Professor Michael Buxton has been a critic of the deregulatory trends in land use planning at both state and Commonwealth levels in recent decades. The Baillieu government introduced the concept of the 20 minute city in its discussion paper "Melbourne, let's talk about the future," released in October 2012 to guide public discussion on the development of a new metropolitan planning strategy for Melbourne.

What does the 20 minute city mean? Is it feasible? What planning tools should be applied to enhance mobility in Melbourne in a way that meets economic, planning and environmental objectives?

Come and listen to Professor Buxton's views on the issue and participate in the discussion following his presentation.

The meeting will take place at Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne.

In this issue

- **Myki: the world post-Metcard (p1, 3)**
- **PTUA lodges budget submissions (p3)**
- **Back to the future with Peninsula Link (p4)**
- **2012 - the year that was (p5)**
- **V/Line travel time blowout (p5)**
- **Call to eliminate level crossings (p6)**
- **The federal election campaign and public transport (p7)**

Newsletter contributors Daniel Bowen, Anthony Morton, Ian Hundley

Edited by Anna Morton

Printed on recycled paper by Flash Print, Collingwood.

Our thanks to Margaret Pullar and the dedicated mailout team.

PTUA lodges budget submissions

The PTUA recently lodged budget submissions with the Victorian and federal governments outlining our recommendations for transport funding. While the federal budget submission was heavily focussed on infrastructure investment to improve the coverage and integration of rail services, the state budget submission also highlighted the need for bus route reform to ensure greater integration with other services without meandering along indirect routes. To achieve this, the submission noted the importance of competent network planning skills and genuine community engagement on the part of PTV - which have not been particularly evident over the agency's first year of operation.

Both submissions pointed to the glaring examples of poor integration found in various tram routes that terminate short of railway stations or other major destinations. Fixing these missing links would create a more useful network and encourage better use of these services towards the ends of their routes. A new station at Southland, as promised ahead of

the state election, was also included alongside a list of other proposed stations, such as Caroline Springs and Campbellfield.

Although the government and Metro make a great show about the need for the Melbourne Metro tunnel to relieve capacity issues, several suburban railway lines and commuter belt regional lines still include sections of single track that limit capacity and exacerbate disruptions. These sections could be duplicated much sooner and at lower cost than the various mega-projects currently in search of funding, thus helping to improve service levels so that public transport can take more of the traffic pressure off roads.

Road users would also benefit from a rolling program of grade separations, with level crossings used by trams receiving priority due to longer crossing times resulting from speed limits on trains. With level crossings scattered right around Melbourne, a program of grade separations could provide more widespread benefits than single large road projects like the East-West tunnel.

Given the governments' interest in productivity, the inefficiency in the freight system caused by differing railway gauges also needs fixing. Victoria's rail network should be seamlessly integrated with the national rail network through a staged gauge standardisation program to be accompanied by work to improve rail alignments, create additional passing lanes on single-track lines, and allow increased axle loadings. This would reduce freight bottlenecks and cut delays for both freight and regional passenger services.

The submissions also called for action on new suburban rail lines, such as Doncaster and Rowville, which are the subject of ongoing studies, extension of the South Morang line to the rapidly growing area of Mernda, and electrification of the Melton line.

The Victorian and federal budgets will be handed down in early May. We will be keen to see if the respective governments heed opinion polls showing that public transport is considered a clear priority ahead of roads for improvement.

The world post-Metcard (from Page 1)

Still to be fixed

While the government may claim that the Myki rollout is complete, in reality there is more to do.

Metcard equipment must be removed from buses and trams, and we are yet to hear about a rollout onto V/Line.

Melbourne bus drivers are expected to start taking topups in coming months. We understand unions have resisted this on safety

grounds. This could be resolved if the policy was that no change is given, and all money goes into a locked box which can only be opened by depot staff - a similar solution to that long used in US cities. This would also reduce delays for all passengers.

PTV also needs to fix remaining issues of reliability, response times, unwanted EFTPOS receipts, slow online topups and confusing online transaction statements.

And of course the ongoing issue of no short term ticket needs to be resolved. Melbourne is one of those only cities anywhere in the world to go down this path, causing issues for tourists and also for locals who are not regular public transport users.

The party that goes into the next election pledging the re-introduction of paper tickets may well find they have a significant advantage at the ballot box.

Back to the future with Peninsula Link

The 27 kilometre Peninsula Link freeway connecting EastLink at Carrum Downs to the Mornington Peninsula Freeway at Mount Martha was opened on 17th January. Peninsula Link was built and will be operated for 25 years under an availability private-public partnership granted to the Southern Way consortium in 2010 by the Brumby government. The total project cost in current dollar terms to the Victorian taxpayers was reported in January 2010 to be \$759 million.

Peninsula Link has had a rocky history. Amongst other things the Brumby government strongly advocated for it as an employment stimulus measure in the wake of the Global Financial Crisis. However, it commenced too late to perform this function. The government also sought matching funding from the Commonwealth but this was not forthcoming. The Auditor-General has more recently criticised the justification offered by the Brumby government for Peninsula Link in a report made to the Victorian parliament.

On 16 January, with Roads and Public Transport Minister Terry Mulder alongside, Premier Ted Baillieu declared that Peninsula Link would reduce peak hour travel on the route from about 57 minutes to 17 minutes and allow people to travel between the Mornington Peninsula and central Melbourne without encountering any traffic lights.

Most local responses reported in the media were at least positive and many were effusive in their praise of the freeway. "**Luke**" from the Mornington Peninsula said in the *Herald Sun*: "Bring it

on. I work in the city and commute from Mt Martha every day, This really opens up the best part of the State for everyone to enjoy. Watch house prices go through the roof."

Several correspondents were anxious to give credit where they thought it was due. "**UnderArock**" of Black Rock said "Maybe John Brumby will ride out on his horse and slash the ribbon before Ted can cut it, after all it was under his watch that this freeway was started...."

ajayouteast injected a sense of reality into proceedings with: "Perhaps Mulder will now and go ride the trains for a few days and see what an absolute mess that service is."

However, the majority of responses provide insight into how difficult it can be to marshal political support for acceptable quality public transport in outer Melbourne. Local politicians are too seldom leaders in this debate and electoral contests more often than not degenerate into bidding wars for expanded road capacity alone. This is despite the collateral costs visited on household budgets by car dependency, alongside environmental damage and major compromises in land use and reduced potential to generate local employment. In the case of the Mornington Peninsula, three quarters of which is green wedge area, the situation is even more perverse than in much of outer Melbourne. The local Shire places priority in being able to get its residents on and off the Peninsula to work each day, and has applauded Peninsula Link.

However, this is not representative of where Peninsula residents do work or would prefer to work. About 62 per cent of Peninsula residents are employed on the Peninsula or in Frankston. A very large majority of Peninsula residents are employed in south-eastern Melbourne. Only 2.7 per cent of Peninsula residents join "Luke" and travel to Melbourne to work.

The idea that the provision of extra freeway capacity, such as Peninsula Link, is necessary to provide for long distance commutes no longer has credibility. Such commutes are a major impost on household budgets and inflict significant social and environmental costs. It ignores the important fact that employment rich and socially connected communities, such as inner Melbourne, are strongly characterised by high quality local or intraregional transport capability, not expensive road based "escape routes."

Whilst significant extra seasonal demands are placed on transport infrastructure on the Mornington Peninsula, and especially from Christmas time until the end of January, this does not come close to justifying Peninsula Link either. Local route bus services, for what they are, are very heavily patronised during these seasonal peaks, despite the fact that one hour headways are common on many Peninsula services. The Victorian taxpayer is stuck for 25 years with paying for another freeway project which was quite unjustified while public transport services slip further behind what is needed.

2012 - the year that was

During 2012 the PTUA continued its important work of highlighting issues, and campaigning for real solutions in public transport.

We maintained a prominent presence in the media, with frequent coverage of train reliability issues, Myki, on-road tram and bus priority, and many other issues.

Social media also played a big role, with more than three thousand signatures so far on the MykiSingles.com petition, launched in November.

The "Public Transport Problem of the Day" series on the web site, which ran from April 2011 until January 2013, was also popular, and highlighted a large number of issues which don't normally get much attention.

Through the hard work of the committee and volunteers, the PTUA released a number of landmark studies during the year

(all available on the web site), showing in detail some of the biggest problems on the public transport system.

A study of fare rises in March showed that over 20 years, CPI was 67%, but fares rose 120% while the cost of car use went up 52%.

In June a major study of Melbourne bus routes showed that on average, buses travel 70% further than the most direct alternative route, explaining why bus travel is so slow and highlighting that simpler, more direct routes are desperately needed.

In October a study of timetable frequencies was published, which found that even during peak hour, while 79% of trains and 97% of trams run at least every 15 minutes, only 21% of bus routes are that frequent.

On weekends just 2% of bus routes run every 15 minutes, compared to 29% of trains and 90% of trams. No wonder public transport is booming in areas with access to trams and trains, but in suburbs with just buses, cars dominate.

Other campaigning highlighted the need to duplicate single tracks, the Baillieu government's 2010 election promises and their progress on them, problems with the design of the massive Regional Rail Link project, and the lack of public transport services to Chadstone despite continued expansion of the centre.

The Annual General Meeting in October saw departing President Daniel Bowen pass the baton to Tony Morton.

Remember, the fight for better public transport is as important now as it's ever been. The PTUA can always use more help with

V/Line travel time blowout

Kyneton locals have recently highlighted increased travel time for V/Line trains into Melbourne.

This is most marked in peak hour - in 2007, just after the Regional Fast Rail upgrades were complete, morning peak times were between 73 and 78 minutes from Kyneton to Southern Cross.

In the latest timetable, these have blown out to between 79 and 93 minutes - with one train now taking 19 minutes longer. In many cases trains are now slower than the speeds *before* Regional Fast Rail.

It's obvious that the increase in services on the Sydenham/Sunbury line to cope with crowding has caused travel times to blow-out. Between Sunbury and North Melbourne, V/Line trains take about 40 minutes - the same as suburban trains.

While the multi-billion dollar Regional Rail Link project will help Bendigo line trains overtake stopping suburban trains between Sunshine and the City, Sunbury to Sunshine will remain problematic.

The cost of full track expansion of the corridor may be prohibitive, but a medium-term solution might

be to ensure passing loops are strategically placed so that peak direction V/Line trains can overtake Metro services.

While St Albans and Sydenham stations already have third platforms which could form part of the solution, we note the Vicroads plans for the grade separation of the St Albans Main Road crossing does not appear to allow for more than two tracks.

Grade separation of the crossing is a much needed project, but it would be short-sighted if it goes ahead while ruling out future track expansion on the line.

Call to eliminate level crossings

The PTUA has called on the state and federal governments to commit to a rolling program of grade separations, naming 23 level crossings across Melbourne as priority projects in recent budget submissions.

Level crossings where trams cross the railway line are among the top priorities for grade separation since trains (including express and freight trains) must slow down to cross the tram square, resulting in boom gates staying down for longer and extended delays for road users. The potential for derailment on tram squares also increases the possibility

of delays for road and rail users alike. Level crossings on SmartBus routes have also been prioritised to help these services meet their potential as fast and efficient alternatives to traffic-generating cars.

Although the cost of each project would be site-specific, the Boronia grade separation project in 1998

makes a good reference point. Performed by the Public Transport Corporation under Ian Dobbs, who now heads up Public Transport Victoria, the Boronia project lowered the double track under the intersection of two major roads



and built a new station and bus interchange. Allowing for inflation, the \$28 million cost equates to \$43 million in 2013 dollars. Using the higher Producer Price Index for road and bridge construction over the same period results in a 2013 dollar cost of \$51 million.

Along with the 2011 grade separation of Kororoit Creek Road,

Altona costing \$48.5 million and the \$66 million grade separation at Laburnum in 2007, this sets a reasonable expectation for the cost of future grade separation projects in Melbourne. These actual costs contrast starkly with the government's cost estimates for grade separations of up to \$200 million each.

Using an average of \$70 million each, these 23 level crossings across Melbourne could be removed at a cost of around \$1.6 billion, or about the amount of taxpayer funds offered by Tony Abbott for the East-West motorway, plus a more modest contribution from the state government. Given the East-West motorway is expected to cost several billion dollars more than any supposed benefits it may deliver, the more widespread benefits of a city-wide grade separation program would be a much wiser investment for Melbourne.

PTUA makes plans for 2013

The PTUA Committee met as usual in January to determine its strategic planning priorities for the year.

As we pass the midpoint of the Baillieu Government's term, our focus shifts to the 2014 State election and the role likely to be played by transport policy issues. The government's record to date has of course been disappointing: far from making progress on rail

extensions and other improvements that featured in the 2010 election campaign, the government touts as its 'top priority' a motorway project that wasn't even mentioned in 2010.

Dissatisfaction with public transport issues will not go away. For the 2014 election it is vital to obtain commitments from all parties that are specific and difficult to dishonour.

This is also a federal election year. While Canberra has little direct influence on transport policy, it does largely control funding for large projects. We will pursue opportunities to ensure Federal funding remains available for public transport improvements and is not all absorbed by road projects.

The federal election campaign and public transport

Now we have a date for the federal election, 14th September, an extended period of argy-bargy can be expected between the major parties as they stake out their position on key policy issues. This might be a good thing, as public transport has seldom been top of mind with federal politicians, and the extended campaign period provides an opportunity for the issue to be given the attention it requires.

That the federal parliament has no constitutional responsibility for public transport is the major reason why it is generally given very little attention in federal elections. On those rare occasions that public transport has been given proper attention federally it has largely been because a major political party recognised, at least to some degree, its importance for the development of cities.

There are many other areas of government policy where the Commonwealth is similarly constrained constitutionally, such as health and education, but where it has nevertheless come to play a major role because its revenue raising powers are much greater than those of the states and territories, and it has certainly never been an inhibition to significant Commonwealth expenditure on roads in the states and territories.

So what stance are the major parties likely to take on public transport in the election? We have a long way to go if the statements on public transport of Julia Gillard and Tony Abbott are a reliable guide. For instance, in July 2008 Julia Gillard, with fellow Labor MP's Nicola Roxon, Brendan

O'Connor and Bill Shorten, co-authored a response to the East West Link Needs Assessment Study undertaken on behalf of the Brumby government by Sir Rod Eddington. In it they supported Eddington's recommendation for the 18 kilometre extension to the Eastern Freeway, now called the east-west link road tunnel, and subsequently promoted by the Baillieu government as its number one infrastructure project.

On 24 February 2013, in launching the Geelong Ring Road, Gillard used language identical to that used by Premier Ted Baillieu to sing the praises of the Peninsula Link freeway on the Mornington Peninsula which he had opened eight days earlier. "Indeed as a result of all this [the opening of the Geelong Ring Road] you can now travel from Melbourne to the Surf Coast without stopping for a single traffic light - a great achievement," Gillard opined.

It appears that these two parliamentary leaders employ the same speech writer to duplicate a simple message promoting greater expenditure on roads. It is more alarming that neither of them have made the effort to be sufficiently informed to acknowledge the emerging costs of urban sprawl and car dependency in both the Geelong/Surf Coast area and the Mornington Peninsula, which are largely a consequence of the failure to develop adequate public transport services in these regions.

In his opening speech to the federal council of the Liberal Party in Melbourne in June 2012, Tony Abbott announced that a federal Coalition government would spend \$1.5 billion on the proposed east-

west link. He has since declared in a speech at the National Press Club that under a government he leads "There'll be a swift start on Melbourne's East-West link, on Sydney's WestConnex and on Brisbane's Gateway motorway upgrade." He made no mention of public transport.

Another space to watch in the election campaign is emerging concern about sources of funding and operational structures for infrastructure projects, including public transport. This is especially the case now that both federal and state governments are crying poor, necessitating, they say, a search for alternative funding sources.

In this context we have seen established in the last two decades public-private partnerships, against which there is mounting evidence: that their funding costs are much higher than traditional sources of public sector finance; that claims of operating efficiencies have been grossly overblown; that the choice of project is often influenced more by the scope to package it for the private sector than its public benefit; of a legacy of contractual commitments that potentially burden future governments and of the emergence of an increasingly influential lobbying and political funding constituency that we would be much better off without.

The sustainable and efficient development of Australian cities is more dependent now than at any other time on the establishment of effective public transport systems, and no more so than in Melbourne, where the Victorian government has quickly demonstrated itself to be little more than a pliable captive of the car lobby.

PTUA News

Newsletter of the Public Transport Users Association, Org. No. A-6256L
Print Post: Publication No. PP 100002658
If undeliverable, return to:
PTUA Office, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne 3000



Inside:

PTUA lodges budget submissions

Back to the future with Peninsula Link

2012 - the year that was

V/Line travel time blowout

Call to eliminate level crossings

The federal election campaign and public transport

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 _____

PTUA office

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

www.ptua.org.au

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 \$30 per year (\$15 concession). Call the office, or see www.ptua.org.au/join

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