

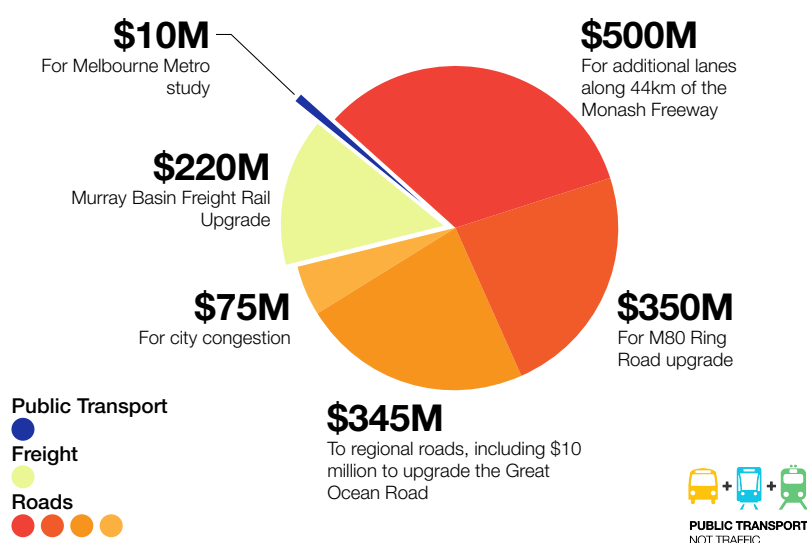
## PT funding, not selfies, please!

**The figures are out for the Federal Government's contribution for infrastructure in our state and less than 1% of the \$1.5 billion in funding for Victoria is going to Public transport projects. The Prime Minister is offering a mere \$10 million for a study into the Metro rail tunnel. The business case is done, work is starting, it's time for Malcolm Turnbull to get with the program.**

Public Transport not Traffic in coordination with the PTUA will be making some noise about this in the leadup to the election on 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

Some of the planned activities are

- We will be taking our life sized Malcolm Turnbull on a tour of Melbourne's train stations, tram stops and maybe the odd street stall for our social media #selfies4PT campaign. If you would like to help show Malcolm around and meet the people, and are a little savvy with social media get in touch, we could use your help.
- We are going to team up with Environment Victoria and the Australian Conservation Foundation to do some door knocking in the marginal seat of Deakin later May and June. Deakin covers Blackburn, Vermont, Mitcham, Nunawading, Ringwood, Croydon and Bayswater. This is a really important way to speak directly to undecided voters with a simple call to vote for a party that supports the environment and sustainable transport.



- Closer to the election the PTUA will once again launch our PT promises report card to help voters make sense of where each party sits on public transport. We are discussing creative ways we can launch this through social media and possibly do some leafleting of train stations, which will again need some volunteers. Watch the website for the scorecard, which will be published and updated as election promises are released.

- Another easy way people can help is from home. We are creating a 'PT letters to the editor' pack

and would love to have some willing people poised to write letters to the editor of local papers or call talk back radio to follow up on issues of the day. We are also looking for people to help spread our message on Facebook.

- We may possibly organise some delegations to visit relevant Members of Parliament and

candidates depending on time and focus of the group.

We have 7 weeks to make a difference, so get in touch if you want to be part of any of these activities plus a few more along the way. You can contact our PTNT campaign co-ordinator Eleisha Mullane on 0418 288 110 or [Eleisha.mullane@ptua.org.au](mailto:Eleisha.mullane@ptua.org.au). We have a group who are meeting to coordinate the campaign - watch the PTNT website [www.publictransportnottraffic.org](http://www.publictransportnottraffic.org) or contact Eleisha for meeting details.

## Keeping in touch...

### PTUA office

Ross House,  
247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne  
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### Internet

Our web site 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:

[www.ptua.org.au/members/resources](http://www.ptua.org.au/members/resources)

### Committee

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

Michael Bell

Berish Bilander

Daniel Bowen

Ian Hundley

Anna Morton

David Robertson

Bruce Sutherland

Jennifer Williams

Geelong Branch:

Paul Westcott – Convenor

### Member meetings

Melbourne:

Meetings will be advertised in PTUA News and on our website  
[www.ptua.org.au](http://www.ptua.org.au)

Geelong:

First Saturday of every month (except Jan), 10:30am  
Mary MacKillop Room, St Mary's Parish Offices, cnr. Little Myers and Yarra streets, Geelong

### Membership Enquiries

E-mail the office (see above).

PTUA members can obtain cheap yearly Myki passes – see  
[www.ptua.org.au/members/offers](http://www.ptua.org.au/members/offers)

### Farewell Petra Stock

It is with regret that the PTUA notes the departure of committee member Petra Stock, who is retiring from her committee position due to other commitments.

An engineer by training, Petra contributed extensively to the campaign against the East West Link and continues to work for sustainable transport initiatives in Melbourne's north and west.

Petra expects to continue working with the PTUA and the Public Transport Not Traffic campaign in an informal capacity.

### Online survey participants wanted

ARRB Group is a leading provider of research and consultancy services in the road transport area. At present it is conducting research to determine the relative importance of different aspects of road travel to road users, including public transport users.

This work is being conducted to help road agencies to improve the experience of road travel by investing their resources in a way that better matches the community's expectations.

ARRB will pay the PTUA \$10 each for the first 100 completed questionnaires received by midnight May 22nd 2016. Please help ARRB, the road agencies and the PTUA by responding to the questionnaire at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CGWCSXR>. A similar interview with drivers has taken about 15 minutes to complete; although there is a large number of questions, you will probably be able to

complete the interview in approximately the same amount of time. You might like to think about encouraging any other regular public transport users you know to respond to the questionnaire.

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Edited by Anna Morton.

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## V/Line answers

**After months of unprecedented disruption, the expert study into the problems which led to the V/Line crisis is reasonably reassuring for passengers. Monash University's Institute of Railway Technology (IRT) report to V/Line found that the reasons were much as anticipated, and the principal remedies are generally uncomplicated.**

In the meantime, V/Line passengers have had to cope with substitutions, shorter trains and strange fare arrangements. The temporary timetable gave reasonable guidance as to travel times and whether trains would be buses, but it has been clear that, where feasible, passengers have been avoiding bus services in favour of those which are trains.

The major cause of the rapid wear on the flanges of VLocity wheels was, as expected, the tight curves on the overpass at North Melbourne leading into Southern Cross station platforms 1 to 8. Although rail greasing has been provided for tight curves on the Metro network for decades, no greasing was instituted when the North Melbourne overpass became part of the Regional Rail Link.

The other key reason for the high rate of wear was the significant increase in the use of the VLocity fleet after the full opening of the Regional Rail Link in June last year. When the weather turned hotter and drier in summer (as it always does), there was no fortuitous lubrication of rails and wheels from rain or other moisture. And once wheels and rails become worn, the rate of wear increases.

V/Line and its maintenance contractor Bombardier (which also

led to a noticeable reduction in wheel wear. The IRT report said V/Line must identify and implement a more suitable permanent method of applying lubrication.

The IRT also noted that the VLocity fleet is provided with stiffer bogies than all other rail vehicles, to ensure that the bogies provide a smooth, safe ride when the VLocitys are travelling at their top speed of 160 km/h. However the stiffer bogies do not steer around tight curves as readily as

those on other vehicles. This is an obvious dilemma, which cannot be resolved cheaply, and the IRT does not recommend doing so.

The report also noted that the wear resistance of the grade of steel currently used for both

wheels and rails is relatively low and

other available grades might be more suitable.

A recommendation to look at easing the sharp curves over the North Melbourne flyover seems unachievable, given that the shape of the curves is determined by the shape of the overpass.



Tight curves on the overpass at North Melbourne

builds the VLocity trains) were not prepared for the situation, partly because V/Line has never experienced such intensity in the use of its rolling stock. V/Line's maintenance management has been problematic in recent years, with some significant problems having occurred on the Gippsland line in particular.

After urgently replacing the worn rail on the North Melbourne overpass, V/Line has been greasing the rail head and wheel flanges there by hand, which has already

## A tale of two budgets

**The Andrews Government is continuing to demonstrate its commitment to public transport improvements with a number of important announcements in its 2016 Budget.**

It's fair to say we are seeing a 'rebalancing' of transport expenditure in favour of public transport in Victoria. While there's still a steady flow of cash for road expansion, there are also similar amounts of new capital and recurrent funding for new public transport services. This makes a welcome break from the past when new public transport initiatives were dwarfed by spending on roads, and when much of the notional 'public transport' spending went on projects such as Myki or park-and-ride, involving considerable expense for relatively little benefit.

Major new initiatives announced for public transport include:

- Full funding for the Mernda rail extension, fulfilling a key election promise.
- The duplication of the rail line to Melton as part of a major upgrade of the Ballarat line.
- Duplication of the single-track section of the Hurstbridge line between Heidelberg and Rosanna.
- New trains and additional services on most regional train lines.
- Funding for new high-capacity suburban trains.

But the rebalancing is still only partial, and in particular promises little for the bus and tram services that perform the 'heavy lifting' in our suburbs and regional cities. And of course there is much to

criticise on the roads side of the balance sheet.

The government's split priorities are evident in its two megaproject announcements: the \$11 billion Melbourne Metro rail tunnel and the \$5.5 billion Western Distributor tollroad. In political terms, this is a deft exercise in 'balancing' the competing interests that drive transport policy in 2016.

But in terms of practical benefit to Victorians, only the first of these projects has a case that does not rely on fanciful projections of 'congestion relief' or denying the reality of induced traffic. The Metro tunnel with high-capacity trains and signals provides capacity to move an additional three West Gate Bridges' worth of people between the western suburbs and inner Melbourne, without adding to congestion elsewhere. But the Western Distributor points straight at the city centre, which hasn't the capacity to absorb huge volumes of car traffic without serious damage, and its stated purpose - to take large trucks destined for the Port off residential streets - appears secondary to the aim of encouraging lots more commuting by private car.

The Western Distributor is an initiative of tollroad operator Transurban, which appears to have convinced the government that its 'unsolicited proposal' will placate the road lobby after the cancellation of the East West Link.

In return for part-financing the project, Transurban gets to extend by 10 years its right to collect tolls on CityLink. Ultimately the road will be paid for by Victorian taxpayers and CityLink users, and they will pay twice - first in

dollars, and second in congestion and delays due to induced car traffic.

The government has also confirmed its commitment to funding the Metro tunnel stands independently of how much or how little it receives in Federal funding. Indeed, for all the rhetoric that has been devoted to Federal funding of urban public transport since Malcolm Turnbull became Prime Minister, the just-released Federal Budget confirms that the Turnbull Government's commitment to Victoria's public transport remains as poor as the Abbott Government's before it. In particular, the only funding offered for the Metro tunnel is \$857 million which, as reported in *The Age* on 2 May, Victoria is already entitled to under Tony Abbott's Asset Recycling Initiative. (This provides an 'incentive' payment to states that privatise assets, equal to 15% of the asset value.)

The Federal budget did provide welcome funding for rail freight initiatives, including the long-overdue inland rail corridor between Melbourne and Brisbane, and a contribution to the Murray Basin project. But there is no real policy shift in sight: even Tony Abbott was prepared to fund freight rail.

Despite the talk of 30-minute cities and a new Federal urban policy agenda, the Turnbull Government is still more enthusiastic about a counter-productive road project with a 0.45 benefit-cost ratio than about the Metro Rail project that was deemed 'ready to proceed' by Infrastructure Australia in 2011.



## The unsung benefits of Skyrail.

**The state government has now confirmed nine level crossings will be removed and five new stations built along the Caulfield to Dandenong corridor, using an elevated solution dubbed Skyrail. This will bring a range of benefits to the travelling public including greater train capacity, easier interchange to buses, and fewer days of disrupted service during construction than alternative solutions.**

In particular, the benefits will be significant to members of the community for whom mobility is a challenge - including the young, the elderly, and those dependent on mobility aids including scooters and electric wheelchairs.

For the elderly and those dependent on mobility aids, uneven and unsealed surfaces, gaps and steps, slopes and ramps are the enemies. Tree roots emerging under paved surfaces, and uneven and unsealed surfaces present tripping hazards or are impassable. Gaps and steps present a barrier that cannot be overcome, unless a ramp is provided. Slopes and ramps are a curse that consumes inordinate amounts of wheelchair battery power. These are all barriers that can put places out of reach. Many existing stations and station precincts along the Caulfield to Dandenong corridor present these barriers, because they date from an era where equality of access was not a priority.

The Skyrail solution will modernise access, and remove these barriers. In particular, it will provide safe, level, open, car-free

plazas at ground level. Elevators will provide fast and safe access to platforms. Centre island platforms will provide plenty of space to navigate safely along the platform. A minimised gap between platform and train will provide access without the need of a boarding ramp. There will be no more unsealed or uneven surfaces; no more gaps or steps; and no long zig-zagging battery-hungry ramps.

Elevators will be duplicated and have backup power supplies. This will overcome the problem often experienced at stations such as Laverton, where single elevators with unreliable power supplies are often out of service, rendering those stations inaccessible.



One 'Skyrail' disappointment is the lack of full weather protection along the length of the platform. For mobility impaired people, boarding and departing at the front of a train is essential for safety. Without full weather protection along the length of the platform, they will often be subject to Melbourne's winter and summer weather extremes. Imagine the difficulty faced by a wheelchair user trying to hold an umbrella whilst boarding a train?

For many young people, elderly people, those who do not own or drive a car, and wheelchair-bound people, trains provide independence. It is true they could travel using alternatives such as taxis, but these are costly and impractical over long distances, and do not represent independence. The Skyrail solution is notable for involving fewer days of disrupted train services than the alternative solutions, and for this reason Skyrail presents a significant advantage to those whose independence revolves around trains.

A final standout benefit of 'Skyrail' will be the provision of new urban connections to stations. Wide, level, sealed paths along the rail corridor, connected to other paths, away from roads, driveways and traffic, will provide new ways to access stations. For many people, these paths will provide shorter, more direct and safer routes to stations. These will be a boon for the young, and those dependent on mobility aids, scooters and electric wheelchairs.

Apart from full weather protection right along the platform, the PTUA is also calling for all the Skyrail stations in this project to be upgraded to Premium status, with full-time staff and public toilets, and for design to include easy access to both sides of roads underneath stations to allow easy access to connecting bus services. These are some of the busiest stations on the network, and a focal point for the community, and the opportunity to provide first class station facilities should not be missed.

## Geelong branch report

**It might be a crude measure of patronage, but it was remarkable that, despite the problems V/Line was having with a shortage of rolling stock due to wheel wear, and the resulting bustitutions, the car park at South Geelong station was fuller than ever in March.**

Public transport in the Geelong region was the subject of a number of vague or longer-term promises in the State budget. However the undertaking to provide seven extra return services to Geelong on Saturdays and six on Sundays in the near future is very welcome.

The Branch has frequently pointed out the current stark contrast between 20-minute off-peak services on weekdays and the hourly weekend services.

Some weekend trains can be very overcrowded, especially, but not only, when there are big events in Melbourne.

We are pleased that an extra service to Warrnambool on weekdays and Sundays has been announced, but would like to know more detail. Our understanding is that this can only be done by making *every* Warrnambool train into a shuttle service from Geelong, consequently requiring every through passenger to change trains at Geelong.

While we agree with the need for a fourth train service, we think the requirement for everyone to change at Geelong will be unpopular. Therefore, we have consistently said that the idea should only go ahead if passengers have been made fully aware of what is planned and are generally supportive of it. We know that many people have no idea that a shuttle service is planned.

PTV tells us that the long-awaited Regional Network Development Plan has at last been finished. However, we are not yet allowed

to know what is in it because it has been sent to the Minister. It's possible that it was taken into account forming the Budget, but we wont know for sure until we finally see the document.

We are concerned that the review of the new bus system, promised to occur a year after its introduction in June 2015, seems not to be anywhere near the forefront of PTV's agenda. We have only had the vaguest responses when we have asked about it. We note that permanent infrastructure is being installed at bus stops on routes which in theory are "on trial", and conversely, infrastructure has been removed from some stops which have been bypassed under the new system, but might, in theory be revived.

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## Z1 trams gone

**Yarra Trams' fleet modernisation campaign has hit a milestone, with the last Z1 class tram being withdrawn from service during April. The much smaller Z2 fleet has also been recently retired.**

Ultimately it's important that the tram system moves to an accessible network, meaning more low-floor vehicles. And in an age where most motor vehicles have air-conditioning, the comfort of passengers on hot days is also a factor in ensuring public transport is competitive with driving.



While some will mourn the Z1s loss, the more modern Z3 class trams will still be around for now, as will other the high-floor trams: the A and B class.

But DDA requirements mean the tram system must be fully

accessible by 2032, so expect more of the older trams to be retired over the next few years as newer, larger trams replace them.

Of course level boarding is also essential for an accessible tram network is level boarding at stops, and it has emerged that E-class trams may require ramps at platform stops - a ridiculous situation for a new tram fleet. This aside, government must push ahead with tram stop upgrades around Melbourne.

## Level crossing removals forge ahead

**It was always going to be a tall order to remove fifty level crossings in eight years, or even twenty in four years, but the state government is on track to do just that.**

They had a head start following the November 2014 election - the Coalition had funded several crossings and design and early works had got underway. But the first completed crossing, Burke Road, was finished about a year early, so it's clear that Labor is pushing forward at full speed.

Most controversial are the nine crossings from Caulfield to Dandenong, the so-called Skyrail. Given the huge number of passengers on this line, it's unsurprising that the government has chosen this solution, as it will mean far fewer closures of the railway line, particularly on weekdays, and there are other benefits (see page 5). The government will be keen to see this project finished by mid 2018, well before the next election.

On the Frankston line, the Ormond/Mckinnon/Bentleigh crossings are underway, all to be rail under road, with two stations temporarily closed and major works set to close the line for five weeks in July. The project will be largely completed by the end of August this year.

Further down the Frankston line, where community consultation is underway, some locals are

concerned at the prospect of another Skyrail, though factors such as the proximity to the beach, and the Patterson River, may make it inevitable for some sections.

In St Albans, works on the Furlong and Main Road crossings are well underway, with completion expected in mid-2017. The same project team is doing Blackburn and Heatherdale Roads in Melbourne's east, to be completed

It's important to bear in mind that while motorists benefit from level crossing removals, so to do train passengers - through more reliable services and the scope to add more services without clogging up local road networks - something that is currently preventing more peak hour trains on the Dandenong line.

Pedestrians and other road users also benefit, with some street-



in late-2017. Early works have also begun on the two crossings at Bayswater.

Planning and community consultation is also occurring at many other sites, including along the Cranbourne, South Morang and Hurstbridge lines, and also at Kororoit Creek Road on the Altona Loop. We support the view of local campaigners are keen to see the latter project include partial duplication of the line to help cut delays.

based public transport suffering regular delays due to crossings, and delays to emergency service vehicles also being a big problem at some locations. So we applaud the current grade separation efforts, and look forward to more crossings being removed.



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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 \$30 per year (\$15 concession). Contact 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 Tony Morton, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne.