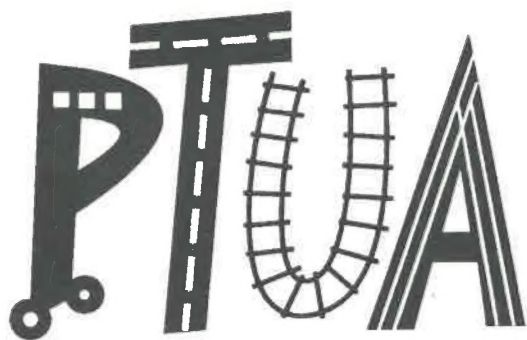




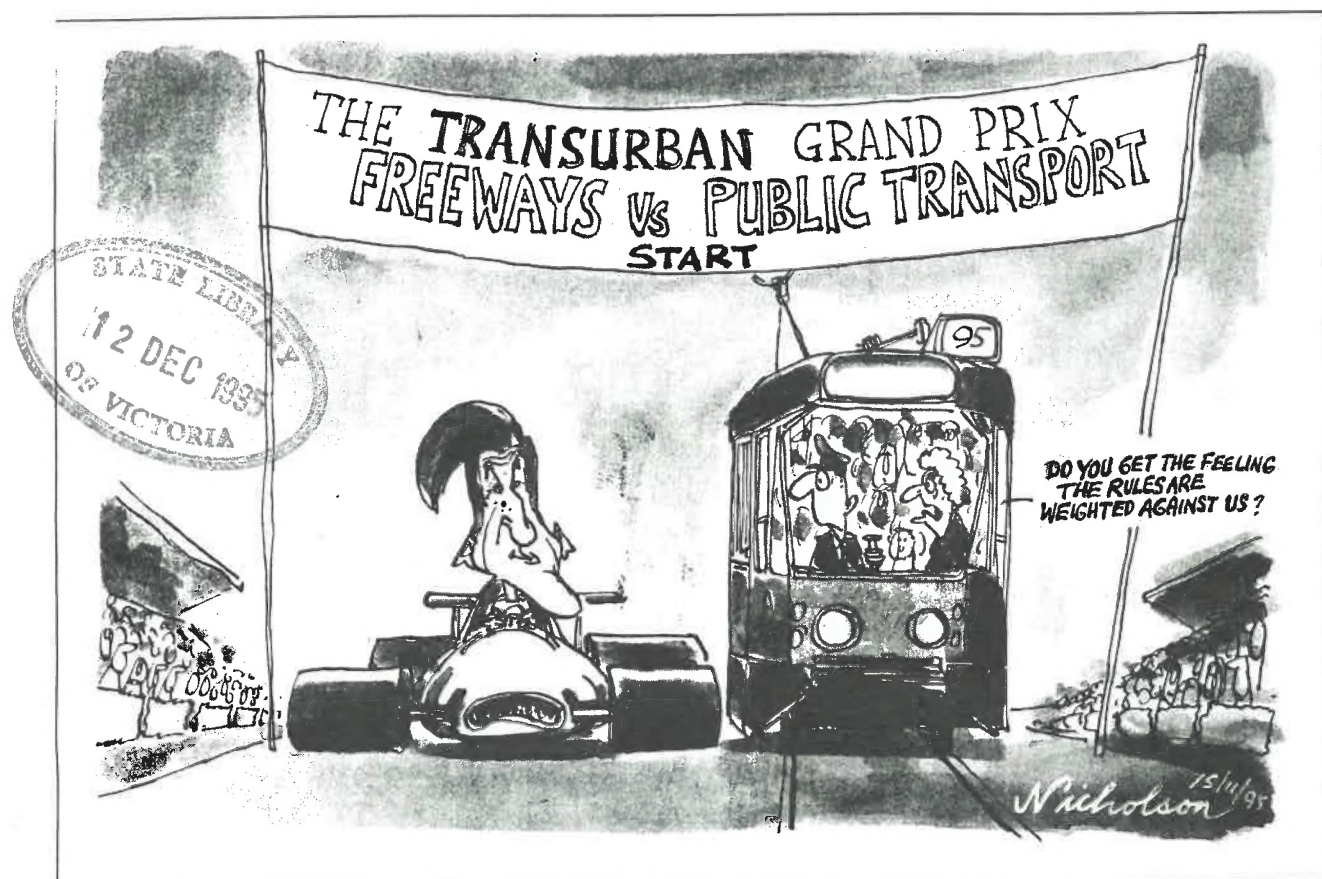
News

Newsletter of the
Public Transport Users Association

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The Australian 15.11.95

The Federal Government Can Stop City Link

Hidden deep in the huge City Link Act rushed through State Parliament in the last week of sitting was the acknowledgment that the Federal Government can stop City Link by requiring a Federal Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Where Federal money is involved for significant infrastructure projects, an EIS is required by law. We know how limited any environmental study for City Link has been. By acting responsibly and calling for a Federal EIS the Federal Government will sink City Link. State and Federal elections are approaching. This is the time to pressure Canberra. Sign, stamp and send the postcard enclosed with this newsletter.

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Thank you and Merry Christmas

To the many people who have given generously to the PTUA during 1995. Volunteers have helped staff the office and stalls and have been active in our campaigns. Thanks also to the newsletter mail-out crew. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

1996 Newsletter

The first newsletter for 1996 will be out in March. It will outline PTUA campaigns for 1996, and how members can become involved in these activities. Contributions are welcome for our first edition for 1996.

The deadline will be 9 February.

Committee members

Paul Mees – President
Neva Finch – Vice-President
Leslie Chandra – Secretary
John McPherson – Ass't. Secretary
Tim Grant – Treasurer
Patrick O'Connor – Media Liaison
Gracy Giradi
Alan Hardie
Tim Hoffmann
Phil Morey
Demetri Pimenides
Gerry Warren

Keeping in touch

PTUA office, Ground Floor,
247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne.
Telephone: (03) 9650 7898

Committee meetings

The Committee meets monthly at
6.15 pm. at 247 Flinders Lane. For
details please call the office.

Membership

Graeme Gibson: (03) 9650 7898

Give a Gift that Lasts and Lasts....

Have you considered giving a PTUA gift subscription this Christmas?

For only \$10 for a one year subscription you can provide your friends and colleagues with the opportunity to be informed about current public transport issues.

They will receive 5 issues of the PTUA newsletter per year, be invited to hear guest speakers at our members' meetings and be able to add their voices to

those of the many Victorians who are calling for sustainable transport policies.

By doing so you will also be contributing to the long-term viability of the PTUA, and helping to spread our message further.

A gift subscription form for 1996 is included with this newsletter.

Treasurer's Report 1995

Abridged Financial Statements

Statement of Income and Expenditure

Income

Memberships	4,920.45
Donations	2,856.60
Sales	982.20
Interest	644.80
Other	1,441.50

Total Income **\$10,845.55**

Expenditure

Office	5,317.14
Newsletter	2,870.37
Campaigns	3,263.74
Other	1,268.38

Total expenditure **\$12,719.63**

Surplus/(Deficit) **(\$1,874.08)**

Minister well received at AGM...

The 1995 Annual General Meeting of the PTUA was held on Wednesday 18th October and chaired by long time PTUA member, Charles Sowerwine. Over 100 members attended.

Guest speaker for the meeting was the Minister for Public Transport, Alan Brown

The Minister spoke for 30 minutes then answered questions from the floor for over 1 hour.

In his speech, the Minister acknowledged the role the PTUA has to play in the advocacy of public transport.

He then concentrated on his achievements in office. The key

successes he saw were cutting expenditure, system extensions (funded by Commonwealth money) and the expansion of disabled carpark facilities.

The Minister stated that there was little chance for further rail extensions unless funded by Commonwealth money. In addition there was "less than 50%" chance of rail services returning to areas such as Bairnsdale, Wimmera or Mildura and that any such services would need to be provided by the private sector.

On the issue of freeways, the Minister was of the opinion that as

85% of journeys were by car, 85% of expenditure should be on roads. This was, he said, a "balanced approach".

Questions from the floor covered issues such as service quality, automatic ticketing, country rail services, staffing and security.

Ordinary business of the AGM followed the Minister's address. The new Committee for 1996 was elected.

Office holders remain unchanged — President: Paul Mees, Secretary: Les Chandra, Treasurer: Tim Grant.

(Reports by the Secretary and Treasurer are on pages 2 & 4.)

...but few surprises in his address

Getting Alan Brown to agree to address the AGM was something of a coup. It has been many years since an actual minister has spoken to a meeting of the PTUA. This, and the fact that the Minister recognised the PTUA as the "peak advocacy body" for public transport, is perhaps the most important point to come out of the AGM. After all, it is barely two years ago that the PTUA was a "Labor Party front" and PTC and Ministry officials were forbidden from speaking with us.

Otherwise, there was little to surprise us with the Minister's speech. Perhaps we had hoped for something more visionary. There have been signs for the past few months that public transport improvements could be on the way. Mr Brown made no mention of any. He chose instead to dwell on the past — on cost cutting and in-

frastructure improvements made with Commonwealth money.

Just one thing...

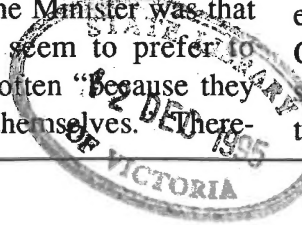
There was only one real clanger in the Minister's speech. Speaking of gauge standardisation, Mr Brown stated that for the first time in over a hundred years, through trains were possible between Melbourne and Adelaide, without needing bogie exchange at the border. Of course, the track between Adelaide and Melbourne has always been of the one gauge and through trains have operated since 1886. It is worrying that the Minister was misinformed over such a key fact, and makes one wonder on what other key facts he is also misinformed.

Perhaps the most depressing statement by the Minister was that people really seem to prefer to travel by car, often "because they want to be by themselves. There-

fore, he suggested, we must cater for this preference. This is surely, to say the least of it, a very negative view to be held by the Minister for Public Transport. It certainly ignores the pollution caused by excessive car use, and the undertaking the Federal Government has given to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in compliance with international obligations.

Still room for improvement

There is no doubt that things have been achieved over the past three years. The Upfield line has been saved, the threat to evening train services has passed. Stations are being improved. There is, however, still a long way to go. Services are still appalling, especially suburban bus services. Country areas deserve their train services back. And will the ticketing debacle ever be solved?



Premium stations – good news for some

The first of the planned 51 “premium stations” have reopened for business after being refurbished, and are already receiving favourable comments from patrons.

As well as being staffed from first train to last, these stations have been renovated to provide a safe, more welcoming environment for passengers. A key feature is the “opening up” of waiting areas so that station staff can actually see what is going on, rather than being barricaded away behind high walls and opaque windows.

At last it is possible for people

to get an idea of what every rail station in Melbourne would be like under the vision outlined in the PTUA’s policy paper *Wrong Way Go Back: the alternative to Melbourne’s freeway explosion*.

We urge the State government (and the Opposition) to build on the success of the first round of premium stations by extending the program to the remaining 130 metropolitan stations. Part of the cost could be defrayed by redeploying some of the large number of roving (or is

that “aimlessly wandering”) customer service officers to staff stations; the remaining costs would be easily recouped through reduced vandalism and fare leakage, and improved patronage.



Herald Sun 12/4/95

Secretary's Report

This is an abbreviated version of the report presented to the AGM

The committee for 1995 commenced its term of office with the development of a strategic plan for the year. The key features of the plan were to be:

- Concentrating campaigns and lobbying on key issues, determined by the PTUA (and not just reacting to outside forces)
- Expanding membership base and financial strength
- Campaigning to take the form of “selling the message” to the community, especially in marginal electorates.

The key issue for 1995 has proved to be freeway development. The PTUA committee chose at an early stage to play a role in this debate, offering public transport alternatives to freeway construction. The policy paper “Wrong Way Go Back” was developed and launched to highlight the shortcomings of

the proposed CityLink and Linking Melbourne freeways proposals. Media releases and stalls accompanied the paper.

In conjunction with the policy document, a special campaign was commenced in the Knox area to help lift the profile of the PTUA and of public transport in the outer eastern suburbs. Community response has been excellent.

During 1995, the PTUA continued its strong ties with a number of community groups involved in the transport debate. These included the Coalition Against Freeway Extensions (CAFE), the Koonung Mullum Forestway Association (KMFA) and the new Anti Ring Road Organisation (ARRO) based in Warrandyte.

The PTUA did not abandon traditional lobbying during 1995. Meetings were held every 6 weeks

with the Ministry of Transport, and attempts were made to persuade the Labor Party to develop a rational transport policy.

Membership of the organisation continued to grow, and for the first time ever exceeds 800 members. (At the height of the Lonie Report campaigns of 1981, the membership was only 600).

1995 has been an excellent year for the PTUA, and there is every expectation that 1996 will prove just as good.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all the volunteers and outgoing committee members who have made 1995 such a successful year. The Committee is also grateful to all our members who have given us their generous support, including donations, which provided vital funding for the *Wrong Way Go Back* Campaign.



Services restored

The October issue of *On the Rails* reports on the situation in some of the country areas:

- V/Line has replaced some coach services with Sprinters on the Ballarat and Bendigo lines
- four services have been extended to South Geelong, a station recently faced with closure
- V/Line staff have returned to the threatened Wodonga station and are now operating the booking office
- Catering has been returned to two services on the Bendigo line for a trial period.

The editor of *OTR* comments, "All these items have one thing in common: where train services are designed to meet the needs of the travelling public, they have in the past and will in the future, enjoy support" The newsletter also states that East Gippsland is ideally placed for the establishment and growth of a modern rail freight system. "The existing contract with

Midway Timber Products resulted not from any sentimental attachment to rail on their part, but because they could move the timber at one-third the cost of road transport"

Member's plea falls on deaf ears

Our special thanks go to one of our members, Mr Vic Maddern of Murtoa, who made the long journey to Melbourne to attend the AGM. Mr Maddern made a strong and impassioned call to the Minister to restore train services to country Victoria, but, sadly, received a negative reply to the effect that Mr Brown did not see very much chance of restoration in the foreseeable future.

Victoria - on the move... THE WRONG WAY

The following letter from Jean Whitla of the *Wodonga Save the Trains* Group suggests that

Victoria again may be proceeding in the wrong direction...

"In a recent trip into mid-western NSW, the Wodonga Trains Group President, Bill Traill, predictably took the time to 'suss out' the state of passenger rail in that region.

Bill says Countrylink is certainly making it happen out west. One of the many positives he observed was a rapid half-hour turnaround for the XPT at Dubbo before it returns to Sydney.

....Everywhere the stations have been refurbished protecting the beautiful colonial architecture, and often sensitively adding modern additions. The many bus/rail interchanges feature quality lounge and eating facilities.

Universally the stations are centrepieces of the towns, almost broadcasting the message "Come and use."

P.S. The latest Carr budget has reintroduced a Wagga-Griffith passenger rail service!"

To book or not to book

V/Line are considering removing seat reservations on the services which still have them; mainly the longer distance services (which haven't been withdrawn).

West Coast Rail services to Warrnambool and the Hoys service to Shepparton already run without

booking. West Coast have commented that it is cheaper to add extra carriages to popular services rather than run a booking operation. We would appreciate any reports relating to overcrowding problems and your personal preference — to book seats or just turn

up on the day. Or should bookings be optional, rather than compulsory, as they were prior to the early 1980s?

But Wait — Don't Ring — Please Write. We will report feedback on the issue to V/Line and in a future newsletter.

Letters

from Simon McInnes

Whilst essentially I agree with the idea of a balanced approach to transport problems (Bruce Wadeson and Sir Rupert Hamer, PTUA Newsletter, Sept 95) there are some points that need to be considered in the debate.

Firstly, in order for a balanced *approach* to work surely we must start with a balanced *situation*. Few would argue, given the quality of public transport (as reflected in the level of patronage), that Melbourne is fortunate enough to have a balanced transport situation. Therefore, if we adopt even a balanced approach from now on doesn't the imbalance that exists at present merely remain and the problems get bigger as the city grows?

Secondly, does spending \$1.7 billion on the new freeways get us closer to a balanced situation? How can spending so much on improving the road system whilst at the same time financially precluding any improvements in public transport (due to the compensation that would need to be paid) be said to be "balanced"? A balanced approach requires that improvements in the road system are matched by improvements in public transport. The "improvements" in public transport we have seen is akin to claiming that fixing the potholes on Punt Road has "improved" the road system.

Everybody talks about balance, yet what evidence do we see of it? The PTUA cannot afford to promote balance because nothing ever gets done about it. We all agree in principle with the idea of balance and then this is used to justify building more and more freeways.

Do Sir Rupert Hamer and Bruce Wadeson really believe that given the compensation that will now have to be paid to Transurban if, by a miracle, the Government decides to *really* improve public transport, the City Link project will get us closer to a balanced transport situation?

from Christine Hooper

Sir Rupert Hamer's letter was very disheartening. I don't believe the PTUA is anti-car. Has he really read "Wrong Way Go Back" and "Greening Melbourne With Public Transport"?

In answer to some of his points :-

The way to attract people to public transport is by making it cheap, fast and frequent - no one wants to wait longer than, or as long as, the trip takes. This may be why so many people have reverted to car use in Melbourne. Toronto's public transport is successful because it is so frequent and buses link with trains for people living in areas not easily in reach of fixed rail transport.

(Doncaster/Eastern corridor has NO train - so we build the Eastern Freeway!)

A responsible government in the "Age of Greenhouse" should encourage people to use public transport and not just accept people's excessive car use.

A large proportion of freight should be moved on rail rather than truck. Roads would be safer and our urban communities quieter.

City Link is clearly for CBD access not bypass. Our extensive suburban rail network meets this need in an environmentally friendly way already. If City Link is going to attract more traffic (as VicRoads have said), that means more cars on our suburban streets, polluting our neighbourhoods and the freeway corridor.. Even if the traffic is running smoothly on a freeway, more cars equals more pollution.

I assume Sir Rupert lives in an eastern suburb, maybe a tree-lined street, far from major roads. I live one street north of Brunswick Road. By day, in my garden and at night in my bed, I can hear trucks stopping and taking off at the last lights before the freeway. What about people living along the freeway? Intersections near here are heavily polluted at peak hours as cars jostle to or from Brunswick Road. This is my home environment. I don't want it dislocated and destroyed any further by the car.

Letters cont'd

from K.R. Wilson (reprinted with permission from *Melbourne's Child*)

Reading your paper and its editorial for August, I can't help wondering if we Australians aren't getting a little carried away in our search for solutions to health and safety problems that involve sacrifices on the part of everybody except ourselves.

I suggest that we are developing a mind set in which we project ourselves as environmental and safety angels doing our best to protect our children from French nuclear tests, house renovators who are careless about lead paint, and truck drivers who drive in a careless or culpable manner.

Few of us are impressed by the gun lobby's claim that guns don't kill people..people do, yet in the next breath we insist it is the car driver who is responsible for road deaths. Just who is

responsible for air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, record world wide heat waves causing thousands to perish in the US and other places, very high lead levels in our schools, (which mostly front busy roads), worsening air quality and increasing incidences of asthma in children?

As we expand our private motor vehicle fleet, we continue to lobby for better roads and the removal of tolls on motorways. As we move from the 2 car family to the 3 and 4 version and desert public transport, we give up on cycling and walking. As we continue to spend more and more of our time in cars, it has become an unimaginable proposition to let your children anywhere near a road and we are therefore forced to ferry our children endlessly from event to event in our expanding car fleet. Could it possibly occur to us that our love of cars has blinded us to the

problems they are causing for us and our children?

I guess I am writing this letter because, unlike others, I don't have a love affair with cars. I have no allergic reaction to public transport and I enjoy travelling with others, walking or cycling. My family and I live close to the things we do and use and try to support local activities, shopping facilities and public transport. We continue to succeed in owning just one motor car and try to avoid using it wherever possible.

Funnily enough our 2 year old son just loves public transport. You just need a little more time and a recent timetable and can have hours of free entertainment.

Alas, for most of us, our most loved child is increasingly the motor car and as such we will continue to protect it from any unkind thoughts.

Wrong Way Go Back – reprint now available!

The PTUA's policy paper **Wrong Way Go Back – the alternative to Melbourne's freeway explosion**, has received rave reviews from members, activists and commentators. The first print run of 500 copies sold out in only a couple of months, but a reprint has now been completed. You can order your copy by phoning the PTUA office (we will send an invoice), or by sending a cheque for \$5.00, together with your name and address, to:

Wrong Way Go Back
PTUA,
247 Flinders Lane,
Melbourne, 3000.

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City **WRONG WAY – GO BACK** **Link**

Jean McCaughey – Co Chair, People Together

Nicholas Low – Senior Lecturer of Planning, Melbourne University

Ro Krivanek – Community Transport Consultant

Public Meeting

Wednesday 13 December 7.30pm

Nicholas Hall, 148 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne

**Copy deadline for the March edition of the
newsletter is 9 February 1996**

Newsletter production : Neva Finch & Tony Fuery.

Our thanks to the dedicated mailout team