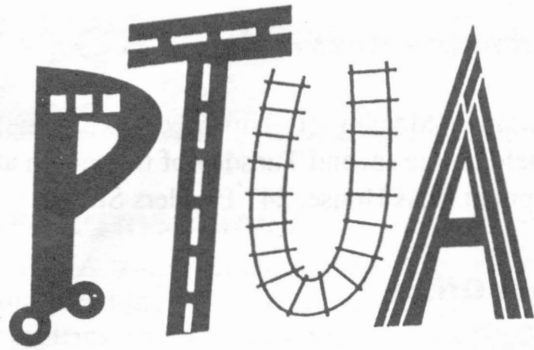




News

Newsletter of the
Public Transport Users Association

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Airport car park opposed

THE PTUA presented a submission to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Committee on Public Works' enquiry into the proposed \$ 55 million multi-storey car park at Tullamarine Airport on 15th February.

We argued that the Federal Airports Corporation should have considered a "demand management" alternative incorporating an airport rail link. We argued for an airport rail service linked into the existing rail network, to enable Melburnians to reach the airport from their homes, for example with "through running" of airport trains

to the Eastern suburbs. Failure to cater for these travellers is a weakness of the proposed monorail and standard gauge links. (more details in "Greening Melbourne With Public Transport").

The Victorian Transport Ministry sent a representative to oppose the PTUA's submission. He said the government supported a rail link "in the long term", but will widen the freeway first. The Ministry had a hard time defending its record on airport transport: the Met bus service to the Airport (route 478) runs six times a day, and the airport stop has no timetable!

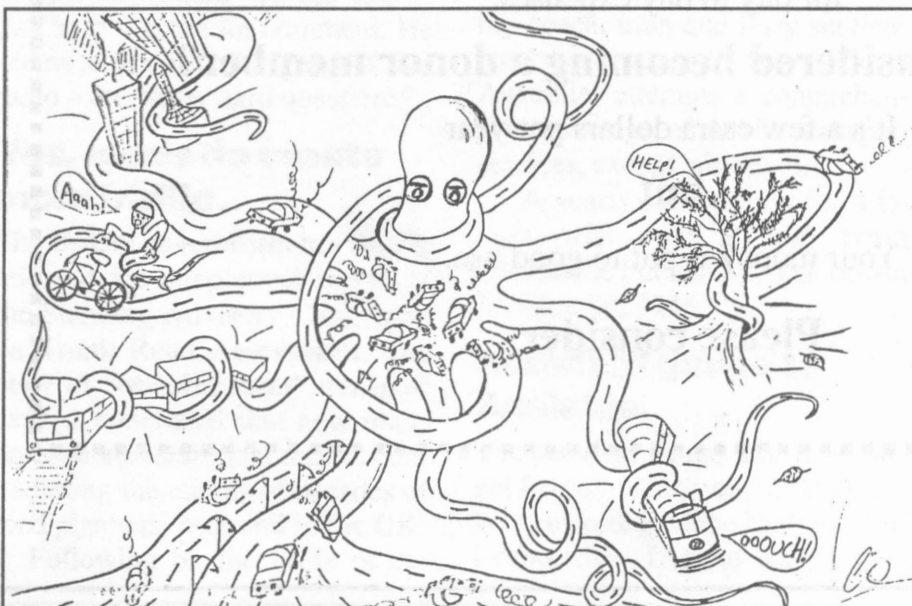
Campaign update

Late last year the PTUA launched the *Seven Day Service for a Seven Day City* campaign, designed to show that Melbourne deserves better public transport services, especially in the off-peak. In short, the type of service that major cities around the world expect.

At present we are working on initiatives to give our campaign new impetus so that we may achieve our aim of getting everyone thinking about essential improvements.

In the meantime, you can help. Write to your local newspaper. State that the services on your bus/tram/train route are inadequate. Explain that better services can be provided cheaply by utilising staff and equipment lying idle between the peaks. Demand a better service from the Ministry of Transport.

You will find plenty of material for your letters in *Greening Melbourne With Public Transport* and *Public Transport in Crisis*, available from the PTUA office.



Cartoon by Coral Robertson

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Keeping in touch

PTUA Office, Ground Floor, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne.
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Committee Members

Paul Mees - President
Neva Finch - Vice President
Leslie Chandra - Secretary
John McPherson - Assistant Secretary
Tim Grant - Treasurer
Patrick O'Connor - Media Liaison
Gracy Geradi
Alan Hardie
Tim Hoffmann
Christine Hooper
Richard Todd
Gerry Warren

Committee Meetings

Committee Meetings (all members welcome) are held on the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30pm at Ross House, 247 Flinders Street.

PTUA Office

The office is staffed by volunteers. When it is unattended, please leave a message on the answering machine. Please call before visiting to ensure that someone will be present.

IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO ALL OUR MEMBERS

We keep our membership fees very low to encourage people to join.

but

We need money for our newsletter, for our campaigning, for the office,
for day to day expenses.

Have you considered becoming a donor member?

It's a few extra dollars per year

but

Your money is put to good use.

Please consider

News in Brief...

Ticketing machines

As the PTUA feared all along the ticketing machines are wracked with problems and are now running a year behind schedule according to Minister Brown. This apparently unreliable system is the excuse used to rob us of valuable station staff and conductors on trams. We now have the worst of all worlds.

Fare increases

In a sneaky move, the PTC increased public transport fares during the holidays. By the time people came back from holidays it was too late to protest.

People living in zone 3 have been hit the hardest. Daily tickets have risen from \$8.80 to \$9.20. The equivalent journey in Perth costs \$3 and in Sydney \$6 and the trip is quicker. There's also been a 10 cent increase for zone 2 and student concession cards will cost more.

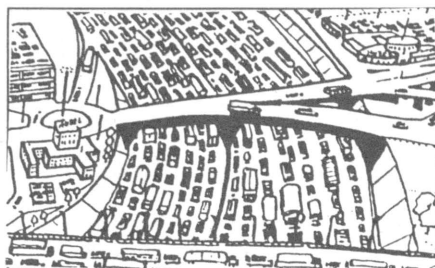
Where is Alan Brown?

This is the question on everyone's lips. Little is heard from him these days on the parlous state of the public transport system, even though our media sources tell us that he is wanted for comment. He seems to be particularly shy of live radio - too many hard questions?

Yes, roads do create more traffic.

The British government has finally released the suppressed report of the Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment. The body of "establishment" transport experts concluded that new roads do generate additional traffic, contradicting the claims of decades of road planners, here and in the UK.

Following on the heels of the



Report on Transport of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, the SACTRA report has revolutionised the transport debate in Britain. Freeways are being cancelled across the country, and even the Conservative government is turning to public transport. A message for Jeff Kennett and Laurie Brereton, perhaps?

The ARA

Australia now has a new association whose aim is to promote the railways. Director of the newly-formed Australasian Railway Association Michael Scrader says that the association's aim is to heighten the community's awareness of the advantages which rail transport can offer in transport efficiency, safety, and preservation of the environment.

National Timetable

At last a national timetable covering coach, train and ferry services has been produced. 'Travel Times Australia' attempts a comprehensive coverage of public transport services, except air travel.

A yearly subscription for 4 issues will cost \$17.95 from Traveltimes Publishing, 3 Goodwin St, Glen Iris 3146.

Standard gauge to Adelaide.

The standard gauge link is on target for completion on 7th May this year, according to the National Rail Corporation. Despite fears to the

contrary, the "Overland" train to Adelaide will be converted to standard gauge and will recommence in early June.

Anti-freeway actions - No 1

Some people have real stamina. Congratulations must go to the hearty efforts of those persistent enough to take on the forces intent on destroying Melbourne's environment.

Almost every day people can be seen along Alexandra Parade demonstrating against the Eastern Freeway extension. Some of the demonstrators have even been arrested, including the PTUA's John McPherson.

No 2

A good crowd turned out to protest against the proposed widening of the Tullamarine Freeway recently in parkland in West Brunswick. Many PTUA members were present at the rally.

And No 3

Another scene of devastation is the Mullum Mullum Creek area which is rapidly disappearing under concrete for the Ringwood by-pass.

The Koonung Mullum Mullum Forestway Association has been protesting against this extension of the Eastern Freeway for a number of years. Members have been arrested, as the destruction of the creek increases. The Ringwood by-pass, an element of the freeway link, is a kilometre of road costing \$30 million.

To learn more about why freeways are not the answer to solving congestion on Melbourne's roads read *Greening Melbourne with Public Transport* available from the PTUA office for only \$5.

Cont'd over

XPT daylight service

The commencement of an XPT daylight service between Melbourne and Sydney was a significant victory for the PTUA and others who have lobbied for its introduction since 1991.

The service, which cuts almost three hours off the old Daylight express trip time, started in mid December and is operated by the "Country Link" arm of New South Wales Railways.

Aside from the obvious advantages to tourism, the day train offers more convenient travel to Wagga and Canberra and other important towns. CountryLink plans to re-schedule most of its operations and it is hoped that this will enable passengers, whether on the day or night trains to travel directly through to Brisbane and the Gold Coast without an enforced stop-over in Sydney. PTUA has pressed for this improvement in the Melbourne/Brisbane link for many years.

An imported "Tilt Train" has arrived in Sydney for testing on the Sydney to Canberra track on which CountryLink now operates "Explorer" trains. It is estimated that if successful, journey times would be reduced by 40% using existing tracks. The main advantage of the Tilt train is that it can achieve an even and smooth ride while travelling at high speeds.

What the papers say

Is there a slight sense of irony in the Vicroads advertisement in "The Age" of 28 January calling for a consultant to write resource material for the primary school public transport education program? The ad listed as one of the key objectives of the program: "to raise primary school awareness of the ease of use and availability of public transport in their wider and local community"

Frequency Frequency Frequency

the message
is getting through

Regular readers will know that the PTUA has been running a campaign to show that higher frequencies are needed on public transport right across Melbourne. Well, it seems that at least one metropolitan operator agrees with us.

Croydon Bus Services (who trade under the name "Invictabus") have recently revamped the timetable on route 664 from Croydon to Knox City. This typical suburban bus route has had its weekday frequencies doubled (from every half hour to every fifteen minutes) and its Saturday service tripled (from every hour to every 20 minutes).

Interestingly, the bus now runs twice as often as the trains it meets, but connections are excellent

(waits of three to eight minutes). There are still no night or Sunday services, but we hope this is just a matter of time.

Croydon Bus Services deserve every success with their new timetable, and with at least one other eastern suburbs operator about to upgrade its services, more improvements could be on the way.

Further evidence to support our enthusiasm for increased frequency comes from Don Gibson of West Coast Railway. In the "Sunday Age" of 22 January, he is quoted as saying "The key to improving the public transport system and making it profitable is increasing the number of trams on the system. Psychologically, people won't wait for transport any more than a third of the time their journey is likely to take".

Cranbourne line opens.

The Cranbourne line electrification opens on Saturday 25th March, some three months late. Funded from the Federal government's "Better Cities" programme (funding was announced in the lead-up to the 1993 Federal election, in which Cranbourne had been targeted by the ALP as a key marginal seat), the project has been com-

pleted for only \$ 28 million, providing clear evidence that rail extensions can be built economically.

The most disappointing thing about the service is the poor frequencies offered:

- 30 minutes in peak period
- 40 minutes off-peak and Saturdays
- hourly in the evening
- 1 hour 20 minutes on Sundays.

Strategic

PLANNING

On 22nd and 23rd January, members of the PTUA committee retreated to the Continental Guest House in Hepburn Springs to plan for the coming year. The aim of the weekend was to review the 1994 strategic plan and to produce the framework for a plan for 1995.

The 1994 PTUA Strategic Plan was based on the realisation that the association would not be able to turn around government policy in one year. Therefore, the aim was to concentrate on what we could do: gaining a good media profile, and starting the community debate by being "proactive" and building coalitions.

When reviewed, the 1994 plan showed remarkable success. *The Seven Day Service for a Seven Day City* campaign was, after much hard work, launched. The community has become much more aware of the need for good, high frequency public transport. Groups like the Coalition Against Freeway Extensions (CAFE) are flourishing. On the national level, the Australian Federation of Consumer Organisations (AFCO) is taking a more active role in transport issues.

The 1995 Strategic Plan will build on this success.

Three key actions for 1995 will be

1. Completion of the *Seven Day City* campaign.
2. Community Education, targeting marginal electorates (that's where the press will be, and where the politicians will listen) in the lead up to the next state election.
3. Launching a new campaign on Public Transport alternatives to freeways.

We will continue to support community groups (including anti-freeway groups, and regional rail groups) in their attempts to get a better transport deal, and encourage groups to form where none exists.

Finally, we will put extra effort into supporting the most important people, our members. We will run regular members meetings, which we hope will be both informative and diverting (the first of these meetings is on March 23 - see column at right for details).

If all goes well, 1995 will be the year when the PTUA emerges as a truly dynamic organisation, constantly in the press, constantly leading public opinion and constantly getting results.

Special thanks are due to Jo Connellan for assisting with the planning weekend.



MEMBERS MEETING

7pm Thur March 23
Ross House
247 Flinders Lane
Entry is free

"Canadians Do it Better"

The secret of successful public transport

PTUA President Paul Mees has recently returned from a public transport fact finding trip to Canada. He will give a presentation (with slides) on how the Canadians have got public transport right.

His surprising conclusions include:

- Toronto's public transport patronage is even higher than previously thought
- most Canadian cities are more sprawling and badly planned than Melbourne
- snow has nothing to do with the success of public transport in Canada
- more people live within walking distance of rail stations in Melbourne than in Toronto

Tea and coffee will be served.

Australia out of step?

While the British Labour Party has committed itself to stopping the construction of any new motorways in Britain, and has a Royal Commission report on the environment to support its stand, Australia still has bipartisan political support for massive freeway expansions.

In Victoria, plans are on the way for a \$2 billion expenditure to double the size of two major freeways and to construct a series of tunnels, bridges and elevated roads that will put the city of Melbourne inside a huge roundabout.

It seems that the Australian government has no wish to see the public transport system competing with the car because it has consistently cut staff and service and raised fares. The government would rather that public transport compete with itself. This will ensure the cooperation between different modes of public transport required to make the system effective and useable will never be achieved.

Visions for solving the transport problems of Australian cities seem to fall into two main categories.

The first is the "concrete and asphalt" solution of building bigger roads.

The second is a variety of "high tech" public transport ideas that mostly derive from the "Jetsons" or from American theme parks.

We lack practical solutions that utilise existing public transport infrastructure, making strategic links where necessary, and concentrate on providing high frequency, reliable service rather than on new gadgets.

To this end the PTUA is developing a two-pronged strategy to counteract the freeway hysteria. The first is to identify what infrastructure already exists in the areas of proposed freeways, and what extensions would

be required to fill the gaps. The second will be to specify the type of service which would be necessary to make the public transport system attractive to use and competitive with the motor car. In Australia, the only system that comes close to providing the required service level is the new Northern Suburbs co-ordinated train/bus system in Perth.

The Federal Government appeared to show some interest in advising the Victorian Government not to

rely entirely on freeway expansions to solve traffic congestion around the airport. However its commitment seems paper thin. Only weeks after making the statement, the Federal Government put a tender out for a \$55 million four-storey short-term carpark at Tullamarine Airport (see story page 1).

A public transport link to the airport would fill one of the gaps in the Melbourne system. The PTUA's president, in a press release on 14 February, called on the Federal Government to abandon the car park plan and divert the \$55 million to a public transport upgrade. "For less than this sum we could have an efficient rail link, integrated with the suburban rail system.....The shortest and cheapest route, via Broadmeadows, costs only \$35 million, \$20 million less than the proposed car park."

In the lead up to the next federal election the PTUA will work with other groups through the Australian Federation of Consumer Organisations (AFCO) to put pressure on the Federal Government to stop abdicating their responsibilities to consumers and the environment, and to concentrate support and funding for long term transport solutions that attack the heart of the problem – the traffic growth – rather than simply feeding the addiction with new road infrastructure.



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Country Rail groups rally calls for re-think

The widespread media coverage of the very successful February 23 rally of Country Rail groups in Melbourne highlighted the importance of the issues raised and the urgent need for the government to re-think its policies.

The groups, known as the Victorian Regional Rail Committees Network, have recently signed up hundreds of new members from across the State. Pooling of the results of comprehensive surveys, research and expertise have made the group's work very effective.

Rather than wasting time and resources on "pie in the sky" projects such as diverting interstate and V/Line trains to Flinders Street station, government advisers need to be directed to re-negotiating contracts with the bus companies so that buses are feeders for the reinstated country trains rather than their replacement.

Despite the Victorian Government's commitment to tourism, they have failed to make the connection between a comprehensive country rail system and the tourist industry. Tourists from other developed countries expect to find in place a speedy and comfortable railway network as an integral part of their tourist experience. This connection has been made in Queensland and New South Wales to everyone's benefit.

Meanwhile the trojan work done by the leaders of the rail groups has born fruit. They are a force to be reckoned with as we approach the next state election. Patrick O'Connor.



Shown here are some of the marchers representing communities across the state who travelled hundreds of kilometres to take their message to Transport Minister Allan Brown. They called for the return of rail services to Ararat, Bairnsdale, Cobram, Dimboola, Horsham, Leongatha, Mildura and Wodonga.

Photo: Andrew Tauber, courtesy of Herald Sun

TRANSIT NEWS AND VIEWS

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(Cartoons and graphics most welcome)

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