

Climate change and petrol prices reach crisis point...
 Government admits “Meeting Our Transport Challenges” missed the mark...

PTUA calls for services



‘Every 10 Minutes to Everywhere’

With petrol prices emerging as a huge issue right across Victoria and no end in sight to increases, and calls for urgent action on reducing emissions, the PTUA has launched a campaign for a big upgrade of public transport services across Melbourne and regional Victoria.

The “Every 10 Minutes to Everywhere” proposal calls for services on Melbourne’s metropolitan train, tram and main road bus routes to run at least every 10 minutes, from at least 6am to midnight, 7-days-a-week.

It’s aimed at providing every suburb with the type of high quality public transport that attracts people out of their cars, not just for trips to the CBD (where public transport already dominates), but also for local and cross-suburban ones, which is the majority of trips for most people.

Routes would be extended in some cases, with new rail lines to serve outer suburbs, and trams better linked to suburban activity centres. Trams and buses would be given traffic light priority to speed up services. Accessible vehicles and stops would be rolled out faster to ensure quicker loading, access for wheelchair users and parents with prams.

In stark contrast to the multi-billion dollar projects proposed by the Eddington report, the result of “Every 10 Minutes to Everywhere” would be that

all of Melbourne would be served by fast, frequent, direct public transport routes.

Regional cities would see similar upgrades, with urban areas provided with frequent bus routes feeding into railway stations and major traffic generators such as shopping centres, hospitals, and university campuses.

While the upgrades would require extra funding, most of the infrastructure and vehicles required are already in place. Costs would come primarily in purchasing some extra trains, extra buses, and boosting staff numbers. This would be expected to be offset by a huge surge in patronage, vastly improving cost recovery, and bringing economic, environmental and social benefits right across the state.

As one radio talkback host commented, with services every ten minutes, “Everyone would use it.”

⇒ **More details: page 4-5**

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Keeping in touch...

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Telephone (03) 9650 7898
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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

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Committee members can be emailed using the format:
firstname.lastname@ptua.org.au

Committee Meetings

Meetings are on the fourth Thursday of each month at Ross House. Members are welcome to observe. Please call or e-mail the office for details.

Branch meetings

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 provide customer service suggestions

Many thanks to those PTUA members who sent in suggestions for the customer service aspects of the new tram and train contracts. Feedback was compiled and reviewed by the committee and submitted to the Public Transport Division.

There was a wide ranging list of suggestions, which included:

- Station staff to have information on local trams/buses

- Better co-ordination of timetables, especially where frequencies match
- More “No smoking” signage on stations and at stop shelters
- Better auditing of information accuracy and quality
- Service disruption plans to be prepared in advance of incidents
- More promotion of the Public Transport Ombudsman scheme
- Timetables to be available two weeks before a service change
- More regular cleaning of vehicles, stations and along rail corridors
- Regular checks of public address systems to ensure they are audible and clear
- Secure bike parking at all stations, and more lockers where they are currently all in use
- All entrances to CBD stations to be open until last train
- Upgrade for Flinders Street platforms 12 and 13

Obviously these points (and the many others submitted) are only part of the puzzle when it comes to providing a quality public transport service. The PTUA will continue to campaign heavily on other aspects, such as service coverage, frequency and operating hours (see front page) and planning and co-ordination.



Copy deadline for the next PTUA news is 30th August 2008

Newsletter contributors: Daniel Bowen, Jeremy Lunn, Tony Morton, Paul Westcott.

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Response to Eddington: Please try again, sir

The PTUA has made a submission response to the Eddington “Investing in Transport” report. As explained in the last issue of PTUA News, the report is a gross disappointment and returns us to the planning mindset of the 1960s.

Our submission will be explaining in detail why a cross-city road tunnel is a waste of money, and why a new cross-city rail tunnel is not something we need any time soon, given the ones we’ve already got. Electrification to Sunbury is something we support, given we proposed it as long ago as 1990, and we have also expressed guarded support for the Maribyrnong Truck Action Plan and new tram priority measures, although we and other community groups have grave reservations about some aspects of these plans. The proposed rail line through Tarneit is problematic and

should not go ahead in its current form; but with some important changes it can make sense as a suburban rail extension into a new growth area.

The overall message we have emphasised is that most of Eddington’s proposed measures are secondary to what is really needed to solve the transport problems in Melbourne and generate a substantial mode shift from cars to public transport. First on the list should be a management overhaul, to create one publicly-planned network from the multiple Balkanised and privatised networks we have now, and to release the ample capacity in the rail system that is currently being wasted as a result of decades of bad operational decisions. Second should be new rail extensions to the suburbs, where new tracks are needed most.

Once we have brought more of Melbourne within reach of the rail network, and upgraded tram, train and bus services to run frequently all day, 7-days-a-week, and are actually on the way to achieving 20% mode share by 2020 (which will never come about from CBD commuting alone), then will be the time to discuss whether we might need new underground lines in ten years’ time.

We have discussed this core message with like-minded community and civic groups such as Environment Victoria, VCOSS and the Metropolitan Transport Forum. While they will be developing their own responses, there is common agreement that suburban extensions and better management are the priority: issues that Eddington has almost completely ignored.

Victorian Budget - Backtracking again

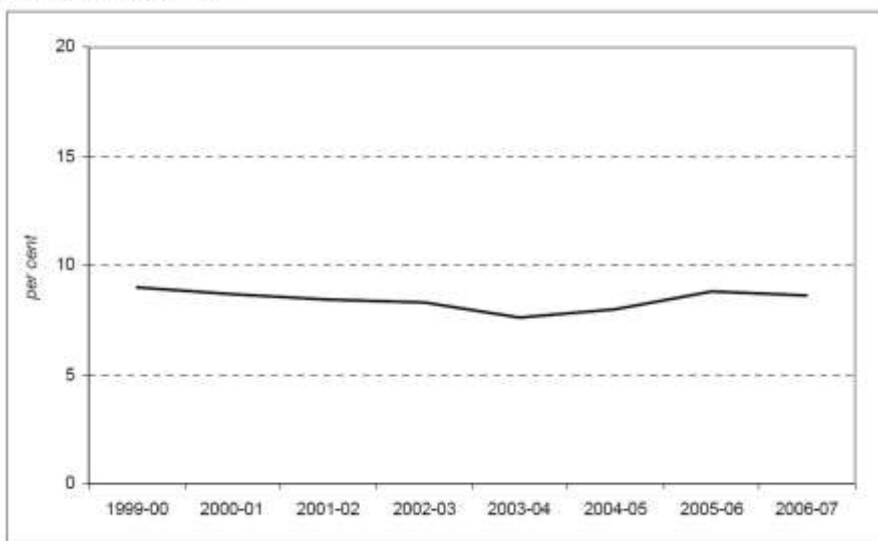
There were few surprises in this year’s State budget; indeed the most interesting aspect of it from the point of view of sustainable transport might be this little graph buried in the appendices.

The axes have been scaled to make it barely perceptible, but you’ve probably noticed it nonetheless - mode share actually went backwards again in 2007!

After public transport mode share reached its lowest ever point at 7.6% of motorised trips in 2003-04, there was hope until now that the recent patronage surge on trains might help it claw back to above 9%, as it was in the late 1990s.

Alas, it appears car use has grown even faster, helped along by the steady stream of freeway projects

Chart B.16: Public transport use as a proportion of trips taken by motorised means in Melbourne^(a)



Source: Department of Infrastructure

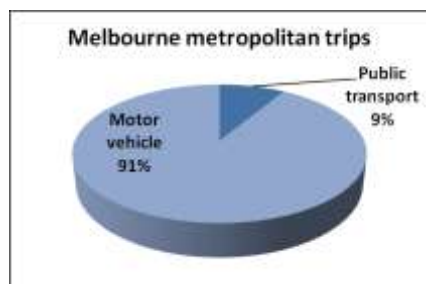
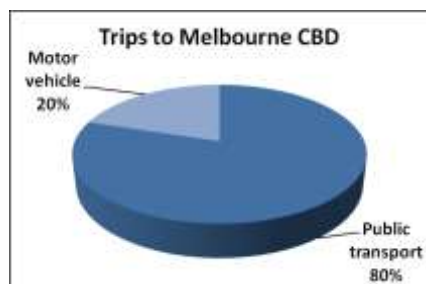
being provided by the same State Government that can’t do anything about train overcrowding.

Source: 2008-2009 Budget Paper 3, Appendix B.

Every 10 Minutes to Everywhere (cont'd from page 1)

Why boost suburban services?

Only a small proportion of people in greater Melbourne come into the CBD and inner-suburbs on a regular basis. Public transport mode share for this inner-area is already high and (together with other non-car modes such as walking and cycling) is unlikely to get much higher. But mode share for trips in the rest of Melbourne is well below 10%, with the vast majority being by car.



To make a real impact on mode share (and thus traffic congestion, petrol prices, and transport emissions), public transport needs to be upgraded to provide every suburb across Melbourne with a time-competitive alternative to driving, for most of their trips.

Public transport that provides genuine “walk up and go” convenience across the city does not need vast amounts of money to be spent on infrastructure - but it does require a big boost in service quality so that people will gladly leave the car at home.

Benefits

The benefits of a comprehensive network of frequent services are many:

- Provide all of Melbourne, and regional centres, with a viable

alternative to driving, for most trips currently not competitive by public transport.

- Resultant increase in mode share, reduction in fuel usage and greenhouse gas emissions.
- A vastly more attractive service, resulting in better cost recovery
- Relieve CBD peak hour by providing better alternatives to travelling at peak times without suffering long waiting times
- Relieve suburban railway station car parking by providing a way for more people to get to stations, right throughout the day, without having to bring their car
- Escape from spiralling petrol prices and chronic traffic congestion

After midnight services

The last regular services across the network would be timed to connect with last services out of the city, which would be just after midnight Sunday to Thursday, and just after 1am Friday and Saturday nights.

After regular services finished for the night, Nightrider buses would run every half hour, along all main routes, 7-nights-a-week.

(As a rule, train and tram track, signal and vehicle maintenance should be performed at night.)

Accessibility

Trams are lagging behind trains and buses in accessibility, resulting in many services which cannot be used by those in wheelchairs, and which are (at the very least) awkward for others who are mobility impaired, as well as parents pushing prams.

As part of fleet and infrastructure upgrades to provide services for everyone, under this plan, we would see:

- a rollout of low-floor trams, aiming for complete no-step access onto the tram system, and a 50% increase in peak passenger capacity by 2020
- more platform stops, aiming for every second stop providing level access onto trams by 2015, and all stops by 2020
- continued rollout of low-floor buses, aiming for a complete fleet of wheelchair accessible buses by 2020

Isn't every 10 minutes overkill?

If we are serious about encouraging people out of cars, high frequency services must be provided to minimise waiting time.

They are also necessary from a capacity point of view. Every main road in Melbourne carries substantial traffic at most times of day. If public transport services running along those roads, or on parallel routes, is to take a substantial amount of that traffic (in line with the government's own 20% target, and beyond), capacity must be boosted.

For instance, VicRoads figures show that in the AM peak, outer-suburban divided arterial roads carry an average of 805 people per lane per hour. On a typical road of two lanes each way (many are three or more), to carry just 20% of these 1610 people per hour, in normal buses (that can seat 45-50 people), would require services running about every 10 minutes.

Local bus routes, filling the gaps between the main routes, and particularly aimed at residents with limited mobility who may not be able to walk to their closest arterial road, would run less frequently, but at least every half hour until midnight, connecting with railway stations and other major route interchanges.

Every 10 Minutes to Everywhere (cont'd from page 5)

Wouldn't it be expensive?

No, these proposals are not terribly expensive, and certainly not compared to the multi-billion dollar projects in the Eddington plan.

Some expenditure would come in extending tram lines, over time electrifying and extending rail services, and upgrading existing routes with traffic light priority (trams and buses), upgraded signalling (train) and buying more buses.

After that, the main expense would be in hiring of new staff - mostly drivers. For the most part, there are enough trams and trains and infrastructure to handle it.

Past experience, including in Melbourne, has shown that a boost in services would also be met by a boost in revenue – primarily full fare revenue, as the quality of the new services encourages car users to drive less. This would result in better cost recovery. Greater mobility for non-car users, and greater relief from petrol prices for motorists would bring huge benefits to the city.

Can our rail infrastructure handle it?

Melbourne has one of the biggest suburban train networks in the world. For the most part, the infrastructure (tracks) can handle

services every 10 minutes, because many parts of the network already run at this or higher frequencies during peak hours or during special events.

There are some exceptions, and these sections would need to run at lower frequencies initially (most likely at half the 10 minute frequency, eg 20 minutes, for ease of operation), until each of these bottlenecks could be fixed.

City Loop operations would be simplified to make the best use of available capacity. Some people would need to change trains, but because of the higher frequencies, inconvenience would be minimised, and overall the system would better serve a much better variety of travel patterns.

Some signal upgrades may be required at points where multiple lines converge, to reduce the impact of conflicting train movements.

The train fleet would need a small number of additional trains to handle boosted peak hour frequencies, when services currently better than 10 minutes would be maintained (or improved), and services currently less frequent would be upgraded.

How quickly could it happen?

It takes a bit over a year to hire and train suburban train drivers. There

is a similar time taken to procure new buses. With careful planning, the bulk of this plan could be running within two years, with a rolling programme of infrastructure and fleet upgrades to continue upgrading services beyond that.

Passenger numbers would be reviewed, and a subsequent round of upgrades would address overcrowding where it occurred, boosting selected services beyond the 10 minute base frequency.

Time for action

The state government recently admitted that their 2006 “Meeting Our Transport Challenges” (MOTC) plan was not, in fact, meeting our transport challenges. In a submission to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) they wrote that recent transport issues were “creating the need to accelerate some plans and develop new strategies not envisaged”.

With a sequel plan to MOTC under development now, it's time for the government to commit to giving all of Melbourne, and our regional centres, fast, frequent, high quality public transport that will provide a real option to driving for more trips, and get people out of their cars.

⇒ www.ptua.org.au/campaigns/every10minutes

Eastlink's open – now the road lobby wants the “missing link”

While plans for the Scoresby Freeway (later “Eastlink”) were being prepared in the 1990s, the PTUA campaigned not only against that road directly, but also against the next logical step: a motorway through Melbourne's north-east green wedge.

Some dismissed this as paranoia, but now that Eastlink is complete, calls to build the so called “missing

link” have already emerged, initially from Craig Langdon, member for Ivanhoe.

This is a U-turn for Langdon, who back in 2002 pledged at a number of public meetings organised by the PTUA that he would resign from Parliament if a freeway through the Yarra Flats ever went ahead, a promise he subsequently repeated in Parliament.

While filling the “missing link” may now seem inevitable to some, factors such as climate change and high petrol prices would make such a new road completely illogical. It is time that the government recognised that the real missing link in Melbourne's north-east is public transport.

Geelong's Moorabool Street still missing bus stops

It is now three years since the last of Geelong's central bus stops was removed from Moorabool Street due to road reconstruction. At the time of going to press, we are still waiting for the release of a report by consultants Parsons Brinckerhoff into bringing bus stops back to central Geelong. This report was supposedly going to be revealed at the start of June.

We were disappointed to be told in a meeting with Peter Dorling, Executive Director of the Committee for Geelong, that the lobby group, which claims on its web site to have "demonstrated a commitment to improving the quality of life for all citizens of the Geelong region", is not prepared to involve itself in public transport advocacy. By contrast, the

Committee is a consistent advocate for major road expansion projects.

On the other hand a meeting with newly-elected Liberal member of the Geelong Council, Andrew Katos, revealed that he is reasonably well aware good public transport requires, unlike some of his new colleagues.

⇒ www.ptua.org.au/geelong

Albury standardisation

At the start of June it was announced that the Seymour to Albury broad gauge line will be standardised and upgraded, under a deal between the Commonwealth and Victorian governments. The PTUA generally welcomes the announcement, which matches what we recommended in the article "Wangaratta Woes" in the last edition of PTUA News.

There is some bad news, in that the current broad gauge Wodonga station, which is conveniently located in the centre of town, will

be replaced by a new standard gauge station on the outskirts.

Overall however, the standardisation project will allow the provision of passenger services that are faster and more reliable than those recently suspended due to the poor condition of the present broad gauge track. The creation by the project of a double-track standard gauge line from Seymour to Albury also promises to make rail freight more competitive on the Melbourne to Sydney corridor, thereby helping to reduce truck traffic on the Hume Highway.

V/Line will be converting a small fleet of locomotives and carriages to standard gauge in order to provide the Albury service. After the project is completed, Albury trains will enter and leave Southern Cross station using the present standard gauge line, which runs under Footscray station and then via Sunshine to Broadmeadows, where it rejoins the current Albury route.

Once work on the project gets underway, the broad gauge track will be totally closed for about twelve months so that the necessary work can be undertaken.

A second chance to win car share for a year

Our competition in the last issue elicited a number of letters to newspapers.

The winner, as judged by the committee, for two letters to the Herald Sun, and one to the Weekly Times, was David Lyons of Maribyrnong. David will be receiving his free GoGet car sharing membership certificate in the mail.

See David's winning letters here:

⇒ www.ptua.org.au/members/competitions

We have a second GoGet certificate to give away. It gets you double-

membership to their car share scheme for a year – worth \$410.

This time we'll give it to the member who goes to see their local MP (state or federal) to tell them about the pressing need for public transport, and then tells us about it, in writing (to the office) or via email (to competitions@ptua.org.au) with a summary of who you saw, and how the discussion went.

The winner will be at the discretion of the PTUA committee, and no correspondence will be entered into. All current PTUA members except those on the committee and their

families are eligible to enter. The winner will be announced in a future newsletter.

And remember – even if you have no interest in car sharing, seeing your MP or writing a letter to the papers is always worthwhile, to help push the campaign for better public transport. (And the certificate would make a great gift for an inner-city friend or relation!)

Hints and contacts are available on our web site

⇒ www.ptua.org.au/help

Outer East branch

The branch is continuing to push along with a number of campaigns. This includes the recent opening of Eastlink, which we know will create more traffic problems and not solve anything. In the long term we can expect greater traffic chaos, while the road will also intensify the issue of spiralling petrol prices.

The Outer East branch has highlighted a list of ten public transport projects that could be completed for a tenth of the price of Eastlink. These need to be completed within the next five years to counter the problems that Eastlink will cause and fight peak oil, climate change and increasing traffic congestion.

The projects include:

- Springvale Road Bus Lanes to be completed by late 2008

- Bus priority at all traffic lights in the eastern suburbs
- Grade separation of Mitcham Road, Rooks Road and Springvale Road level crossings
- Upgrade off-peak daytime, evening and weekend train services on Belgrave, Lilydale, Glen Waverley and Alamein lines to operate at least every ten minutes
- Extension of tram 48 to Doncaster Shoppingtown
- Extension of tram 75 to Knox City
- Upgrade of route 733 (Middleborough Road) and 693 (Ferntree Gully Road) to SmartBus frequencies
- Duplication of single track sections on the Belgrave and Lilydale railway lines
- Construction of Lyndhurst station and duplication of the Cranbourne line
- Upgrade local bus services to operate at a minimum half hourly frequency between 6am and 10pm

The branch has also been busy meeting with a number of politicians, both state and federal to ensure that the issue of public transport is adequately addressed in Melbourne's Outer East.

⇒ www.ptua.org.au/outereast

Recent campaign activity

With record petrol prices, and growing concern on greenhouse emissions, there's a lot going on in transport – too much to include in this newsletter. Recent PTUA campaign activity of note includes:

Roads vs PT spending

Analysis by the PTUA published in The Age on 5th May shows that spending on major roads infrastructure continues to far outweigh that on public transport infrastructure.

Our study showed that since 1999, some \$1.7 billion has been spent by the State and Federal governments on major road projects (excluding \$2.5 billion on Eastlink), compared to just \$322 million on new public transport infrastructure.

⇒ www.ptua.org.au/2008/05/05/

Climate & transport forum

The *Speeding Towards Dangerous Climate Change* forum held on 15th June at Melbourne Town Hall

highlighted the role transport plays in reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions. Presenters were David Spratt (co-author of the new book *Climate Code Red*), Patrick Moriarty (Monash University; GAMUT), Elliot Fishman (Cycling Promotion Fund) and PTUA President Daniel Bowen.

Slides are available on our web site.

⇒ www.ptua.org.au/2008/05/19/

Emissions: car vs PT

A PTUA comparison of the CO₂ emissions of some typical motor vehicles, and different modes of public transport, adjusted for typical peak hour occupancy rates, showed all types of public transport are far "greener" than even the most efficient available hybrid vehicles.

Figures were presented at the June 15th forum, and published in The Age, and subsequently re-published in V/Line's newsletter.

⇒ www.ptua.org.au/2008/06/17

Climate Emergency rally

PTUA supported the Climate Emergency Rally on July 5th. Around 5000 people marched from the City Square to Alexandra Gardens to form a human sign saying "Climate Emergency". The event gained prominent coverage on TV news.

⇒ climaterally.blogspot.com

Call for Federal funding

On July 8th the PTUA participated in a media event held by the Bus Industry Confederation to highlight a call for the Federal Government to fund urban public transport.

Can you help?

We can always do with more help for our campaigning. If you can help, please contact the office.

And remember, you can stay fully up to date with PTUA campaigns by keeping an eye on our web site.

⇒ www.ptua.org.au

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Inside:

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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