

## Spoke the truth to ‘Mad schemes’.

### Paul Mees, 20/3/1961–19/6/2013

*"This project is about the future of Melbourne. If \$15 billion is invested in the East West link or even \$8 billion in the eastern half that they wish to build now, there will be no money left for any substantial public transport projects in Melbourne for at least a generation.... That's why we have to stop this mad scheme, this mad scheme that even on the government's own analysis can't produce a proper positive return on investment, and that's why we have to ensure that transport policy moves away from roads and in the direction of rail and excellent public transport."*

Right up until his sad and untimely death from cancer, Paul Mees was a beacon of leadership and guidance for the public transport movement in Victoria. Drawing on his lifelong passion for social justice, his travails as a public transport user growing up in the outer suburbs of Melbourne, and his extensive experience in the law, academia and the church—not to mention numerous Debating Societies—Paul was always ready with an argument and was usually proved right.

Paul's involvement with the PTUA began in 1986, under the wing of another stalwart of the Association, the late Patrick O'Connor. He was the Association's Secretary between 1987 and 1992, then President until 2001. During that time Paul's name was almost synonymous with that of the PTUA and public transport advocacy in Victoria. This was due not only to Paul's take-no-prisoners campaigning style, but also to his extensive intellectual contribution to transport planning.

Paul was instrumental in developing what might be called the 'internal' analysis of the public transport problem: the 'frequency, speed and connections' that make the difference between good and bad transport

systems, regardless of 'external' factors like population density and assumed preferences. This vision of a better transport system was first articulated in the PTUA's 1991 manifesto "Greening Melbourne with Public Transport", on which Paul worked together with Ray Walford, Jenny Bonham, Ros Hartnell and other PTUA activists of the time. Contact with the UK transport planner John Whitelegg and Melbourne University's David Yencken persuaded Paul to take up a career as an 'activist academic', undertaking PhD studies comparing the history of transport planning in Melbourne and Toronto, and then publishing his influential books "A Very Public Solution" and "Transport for Suburbia".



The 1990s were a period when support for public transport renewal in Melbourne and Victoria was being reinvigorated, in no small part due to Paul's analysis and its activist expression through the PTUA. An important early success here was the years-long community campaign to upgrade the Upfield line, threatened at one stage with

closure. But it was also a time when communities were heavily occupied in rearguard actions against freeways and cutbacks in public transport services (especially in outer suburbs and regional Victoria), due to the persistence of the older view that the decline in public transport use was inevitable. This came to a head in a number of high-profile legal challenges in the late 1990s, which briefly postponed Transurban's listing on the Stock Exchange (to the dismay of the senior executives about to uncork the champagne), and generated quite a few amusing anecdotes about Paul's efforts to avoid process servers by camping out in friends' homes and offices. **(continued on p5)**

Keeping in touch...

## PTUA office

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## Membership Enquiries

Call or 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)

## 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

Daniel Bowen

Matthew Ferrantino

Ian Hundley

Terry Konstandelis

Paul Prentice

Nalla Sivarasa

David Robertson

Alison Clarke

### Branch convenors:

Paul Westcott – Geelong

Terry Konstandelis – Eastern Suburbs

Committee members can be emailed using the format:

[firstname.lastname@ptua.org.au](mailto:firstname.lastname@ptua.org.au)

## Member meetings

### Melbourne:

Every couple of months, 6pm  
Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane (see below for details)

### Eastern Suburbs:

Fourth 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 22 AUGUST

**Why do governments continually waste billions of dollars on the wrong transport projects and what needs to be done about it?**

In January 2013 the Baillieu government opened the Peninsula Link project on the Mornington Peninsula. Was this a "dry run" for the \$8 billion east-west link, which came out of nowhere and threatens to torpedo public transport for a generation and makes a mockery of the notion of integrated transport and urban planning? Killing off the east-west link would be a game changer.

Our guest speaker, **Professor Nicholas Low** of Melbourne University's Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, is an international researcher of the politics of planning and transport. In his presentation, Nicholas Low will be addressing the phenomenon of path dependency in transport planning and the institutional barriers that favour private road-based transport over public transport - and what can be done to defeat it.

**Meeting time and venue:** 6.00 pm, Thursday 22 August, Mezzanine Room, Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane, Melbourne.

## Community Forum: The 2013 Federal Election and Public Transport in Melbourne's West

The PTUA is hosting a community forum looking at public transport issues in Melbourne's Western Suburbs. With a federal election imminent, residents are concerned about how transport policy will impact on access to jobs, education and services, as well as local neighbourhood amenity.

This community forum is an opportunity to hear from transport planning experts, local Members of Parliament, Councillors and federal candidates. Come along and ask your questions and learn how they plan to solve public transport in Melbourne.

**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> August 6.30pm doors open 6pm, food and drinks available from the bar Newport Bowls Club, 4 Market St Newport**

Newsletter contributors Daniel Bowen, Anthony Morton, Ian Hundley, Paul Westcott.

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## Trains Not Toll Roads

On June 13<sup>th</sup> the City of Yarra launched the Trains Not Toll Roads Campaign, focused on stopping the East West Link. The PTUA supports this campaign, well aware that if this toll road is built there will be no major public transport investment for a generation.

PTUA members were active on the day, with an early start at 7am in Clifton Hill. We all stood at the Hoddle St. exit with placards saying things like 'One Train = 800 cars' and 'Trains Not Toll Roads'. While the morning was cold we all felt a buzz sharing our message with the thousands of commuters stuck in traffic at the Hoddle Street end of the Eastern Freeway. Every car stopped for

several minutes in the traffic - plenty of time for each motorist to consider our signs and ponder how much faster a train would be.

At 6.30pm over 400 people filled the Fitzroy Town Hall for the official launch. A video message from Paul Mees provided a great start to the night. Paul reminded everyone that the toll road was 'a mad scheme' which would suck funding out of public transport for a generation.

Alannah MacTiernan, the former WA Minister for Planning and Infrastructure was brought out by the PTUA. In her address to the crowd she discussed the semiotics of running a train line down the centre of a congested freeway and how this changes understanding of

mobility. Alannah encouraged the crowd to be vocal and strategic in their campaign for better public transport.

The PTUA is pushing to be more active. In order to see our public transport priorities implemented we need to show politicians how effectively we can mobilise communities around public transport issues. It is time to make sure that not only are our policies the most sensible but they are the most widely supported.

Public transport is more important every day for more people. If we organise our support and commitment we can change public transport policy in this city. Come and get active for the cause!

## Regional Rail Link project

In early July a small group from the PTUA Committee toured the Regional Rail Link project with RRL CEO Corey Hannett. The project provides a new rail line, adding capacity to existing lines between the city and Sunshine for all V/Line trains on the Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong lines. It also provides a link for Geelong trains to new stations in Tarneit and Wyndham Vale.

Stopping patterns are unclear at present. Indications from an appendix in the Rowville study are that all trains will stop at Footscray, and the only trains stopping at Sunshine will be about half of those on the Ballarat line. Off-peak Geelong trains will stop at Tarneit and Wyndham Vale but not Sunshine; half the peak hour trains from Geelong will run express through the metropolitan

area except for Footscray. Firm information is scarce however, and the RRL project team weren't able to provide definite answers, as their responsibility is simply to provide the infrastructure. We have been assured that modeling shows the overall trip time for Geelong trains will be no more than the current travel times, with improved punctuality thanks to the removed interaction with Metro services.

Concerns have been raised in the western suburbs over how few trains will stop at Sunshine - we would hope that this is considered carefully by timetable planners.

While the RRL project is costing a lot of money, it does appear fairly well designed, with an eye to the future: signalling equipment will, where applicable, be capable of

later conversion to the high-capacity in-cab variety; the two new stations are being built with provision for additional tracks; and in the inner-city section provision is being made for later electrification. It's probable that some parts of the project, such as additional platforms at Southern Cross, will be available before the project is finished in 2016.

While the separation of V/Line and metropolitan services makes a lot of sense, the PTUA remains concerned about the loss of interchange from V/Line to metropolitan services at Werribee and North Melbourne, the latter providing access to the 401 shuttle bus to the University and Medical precinct, and to northern suburban rail services including for events at the Showgrounds and Flemington.

## New Thinking is Signalled For Melbourne's Transport Woes

### Melbourne faces big decisions about what kind of city it wants to be in the 21st century.

Our State Government is now driven by a vision drawn from Los Angeles. The East West Link promises not merely to increase levels of car and truck traffic and pollution. Worse, it will guarantee there are no funds available to improve transport for decades.

Meanwhile, such official backing as has existed for public transport has focussed almost exclusively on the 9km 'Melbourne Metro' rail tunnel. While undeniably a more worthwhile project than the East West Link (and with a higher benefit-cost ratio) the Metro tunnel has monopolised public transport planners' attention to the point where it has all but blinded them to the existence of less costly but more beneficial improvements.

The Metro tunnel is promoted as the 'magic pill' solving every problem with the rail network—a claim it cannot possibly live up to in reality. To rationalise the single-minded devotion to tunnels, planners within PTV have got into the habit of claiming it is a prerequisite for virtually any other improvement—even when it bears no logical connection at all!

The rail network would benefit substantially more from measures that bring it up to date with the state of the art in European urban rail systems. A good benchmark is the Paris 'RER' suburban network, which shares many features with ours: it operates on double track, with lines that combine in the city but branch into three or four parts in the suburbs. One difference is that the RER operates double-deck trains, which makes it vulnerable

to dwell-time issues at key stations at least as severe as ours.

Yet the RER is able to schedule trains reliably every 120 seconds in peak hour—a feat said to be impossible here. Actually, until a few years ago it wasn't possible in the RER either. Then the Parisians rolled out a key capacity-boosting measure: described technically as "moving-block in-cab signalling".

Trains on rails do not operate like trams or cars on roads. Because they're so much heavier, they require longer distances to stop, so it isn't safe for drivers to rely on sight to keep a safe distance, as a car or tram driver can. Instead, drivers rely on signalling that tells trains when it is safe to proceed. The technical attributes of this signalling are the key factor that determines how many trains per hour can run on a single track.

Melbourne's 'fixed block' signals were standard for rail systems through most of the 20th century. Imagine a road with traffic lights every 500 metres, where a car can proceed into one of these 500 metre 'blocks' when the light turns green, but then the light turns red, and does not turn green again until the first one has cleared the block. With such a system the traffic capacity depends critically on factors like block spacing.

Our highest standard currently is 2-minute fixed block signalling. This has a 'theoretical' capacity of 30 trains per hour, but because running times vary randomly, the 'practical' capacity is about 80% of this, or 24 trains per hour. On suburban sections of many lines (such as to Dandenong) the signalling headways are longer, permitting just 16–20 trains.

Moving-block signals are a big improvement, operating more like the way cars follow each other on a motorway. The system monitors the distance between trains and issues signals to the driver whether it is safe to proceed at full speed, or if it is necessary to slow down or stop. Effectively, the signal 'block' moves with the train. The signals are issued in the driver's cabin rather than with trackside lamps, hence "in-cab signalling".

With this type of signalling—now available off-the-shelf from a number of suppliers—it becomes possible to reliably timetable trains 2 minutes apart or better on the same track. Paris manages this well. It is also being installed on the London Underground, where the Victoria Line now operates 33 trains per hour—and anyone who has been to Kings Cross knows the crowd management problems there are every bit as challenging as they are at Flinders Street!

In Melbourne, the likely capacity improvement is at least 50%. This is capable of being achieved on every line in the system at an estimated cost (based on estimates from suppliers) of between \$1.5 and \$3 billion. By comparison, the \$5 billion to \$10 billion Metro tunnel provides more capacity on just two groups of lines. New signals also provide the additional capacity to fit Doncaster trains on the existing line to Victoria Park: the Metro tunnel does not.

To obtain the full benefit some additional infrastructure upgrades will eventually be necessary, the foremost being level crossing grade separations. The important thing is to not be limited in our thinking when it comes to effective alternatives.

**(continued from p1)**

As President, Paul led the PTUA through high-profile campaigns against public transport cuts in the early 1990s (exemplified by the scratch ticket debacle and the threat to evening train services), then against CityLink and the Scoresby Freeway (now Eastlink) in the late 1990s. Meanwhile, the push for privatisation culminated in the sell-off of trains and trams in 1999, with the PTUA speaking out in defence of the public interest.

Paul departed the PTUA Presidency in late 2001 to work as an independent academic and community activist. In 2002 he formed the Public Transport First Party which contested five seats in the Victorian election (including current PTUA President Tony Morton as candidate for Brunswick). There followed, over the next ten years, a series of attempts to translate the very real —if latent—community support

for better public transport into political action. Only a handful of votes prevented Paul becoming a councillor at the City of Yarra in 2004: a job that would have challenged him in entirely new ways!

Melbourne's public transport today remains far from perfect, yet it is surely true that without his contribution both within and outside the PTUA, our planners would have struggled even more than they did to respond to the sharp increases in public transport patronage since 2005. We need only recall how as late as 2006 the authorities insisted that—with 95 trains arriving in the city in the busiest hour of the day—the rail system was "full" and lacked capacity for many additional services. Today there are 131 trains arriving in the busiest hour, as a result of applying the simplest of the capacity-boosting measures suggested by Paul and the PTUA at

the time (without counting the additional capacity to be released by the Regional Rail Link project).

Paul's untiring presence in the media and on public platforms—not to mention his direct language, clear vision, and care for the future of his city—was recognised and valued by very many Melburnians. This was demonstrated by the groundswell of support that followed his run-in with the authorities at the University of Melbourne in 2008, and in his last weeks, as many people learned for the first time of his serious illness.

There are many signs that the tide of active public opinion is turning. Paul's long ambition for his local Council to take up the public fight against freeways has come to fruition, and the PTUA's new community campaigner (see below) is starting to turn the latent support for public transport, and anger at broken promises, into a serious political force.

## **A note from our new Community Campaigner, Cait Jones**

The June PTUA Members Meeting examined how the PTUA might better influence public transport policy. It considered the political factors in why public transport is not prioritised and the importance of citizens being actively and strategically engaged with the political system to bring about change.

My name is Cait Jones. I have recently commenced as the Community Campaigner with the PTUA. I will be working to enable members of the PTUA to become active public transport campaigners. While PTUA members understand that a better public transport network will enhance Melbourne's economy, ecology and social equity, politicians continue to prioritise road projects that entrench car

dependence and drain funds from public transport. Reason, data and best practice alone will not sway politicians whose commitment to roads is acculturated, ideological and irrational. This can only be done by mobilising communities to act collectively and strategically in relation to public transport policy.

In 2010 the Liberal National Party and the Labor Party realised that transport is an issue that Melburnians will vote on. Since then the Government has not felt coordinated and consistent pressure from the public at large; the result is a back flip on the East West Link - a critical threat to public transport in Victoria.

Now is the time for PTUA members to get active. To begin with we need to get out into communities and engage more

people, and develop our capacity to communicate effectively. This is happening now – we would love you to come along!

Over the next 18 months we will be getting out to community forums/events, public transport stations and stops educating the public about why public transport expansion is critical for Melbourne's future. This education is also about outreach and building our active membership so that we can illustrate to the politicians that people are demanding more public transport.

If you are interested in being involved get in touch – email me on [cait.jones@ptua.org.au](mailto:cait.jones@ptua.org.au) or come along to the next members meeting in August.

## Myki on V/Line

It was no great surprise when the government announced on 11th June the introduction of the overdue and over-priced Myki system on V/Line 'commuter' services. The phased introduction started on 8th July with the least patronised line, Seymour, and ended on 29 July with the most heavily patronised line, Geelong.

At the same time, PTV and V/Line have re-named the two types of regional rail services. What were formerly 'Interurban' services have become 'Commuter' services, and what were formerly 'Intercity' services have become 'Long Distance' services. As the government announced a couple of years ago, Myki will only be used on Commuter services and will not be used for Long Distance services, on which paper tickets will continue to be used.

Myki now faces the test of coping with large numbers of regional rail users. However the government has also announced that, as with the transition from Metcard, the

existing V/Line paper tickets and Myki will continue in tandem for the time being. Paper tickets will be abolished in the medium term, although no date has been announced. How many casual users will make the transition to Myki before they are forced to is obviously yet to be seen.

Although casual users will still be able to use paper tickets for a while, regional periodical ticket users will have to switch to Myki Pass after 22 September 2013, when the issuing of paper periodicals will cease. However existing periodicals can continue to be used until they expire.

Regional passengers used to using Myki only on relatively cheap local bus services will have to adjust to the far higher fares on trains. Topping-up on buses has been a handy option so far, but that is limited to \$20 a time.

An obvious difficulty for Myki with V/Line services, as opposed to Metro ones, is that V/Line

ticketing incorporates off-peak fares. Seymour was the first V/Line service to have Myki enabled, on 24 June. Therefore it's particularly ironic that the first off-peak service to leave Southern Cross in the evening is the 6:01 to Seymour and Albury. If you are catching this train, or for that matter the 6:06 to Bacchus Marsh or any others leaving just after 6pm, but touch-on before 6pm (as one surely would do, because otherwise you might miss the train) you will be charged the peak fare. This also happens, we suppose, if you are coming from a Loop station and join the train at North Melbourne (though the 6:01 doesn't actually stop at North Melbourne).

Given the very long lead time for this transition, it is completely unacceptable that PTV says it is still 'working on solutions'. In the meantime, the only recourse for passengers wrongly charged is to request a refund using the usual bureaucratic procedures.

## PSO facilities rollout onto stations

At many stations you will see brand new buildings being constructed, on platforms and in some cases adjacent to stations. They're not passenger facilities, but exclusively for use by Protective Service Officers.

The rollout of PSOs continues apace, and while at some stations they are being accommodated in existing buildings, at others these new buildings, nicknamed "Baillieu Boxes" by some, are under construction.

Thanks to a presentation by Public Transport Minister Terry Mulder

before Public Accounts And Estimates in May, we know that they include lockers, a kitchen and toilet for officers, desks and workstations (including computer connections to the Victoria Police IT network), and a holding cell (officially called a "Hand-over room").

The construction of these facilities around the rail network, as well as parking for police vehicles in some locations, is costing some \$67.8 million, on top of the costs of the PSOs themselves of \$212 million over four years.

While the presence of officers at night has been mostly welcomed by passengers, it remains to be seen if it will result in a jump in night time train patronage, particularly given low service frequencies on most lines after dark.

As noted in the last edition of PTUA News, their effectiveness at reducing crime varies according to location, and questions remain around the overall benefit of the program compared to providing regular staff on stations and placing security only where it is needed.

# Geelong Branch Report

## Night Football Buses

It was extraordinary (although pleasing) that at the eleventh hour PTV decided to fund some bus services after the first night football game at Kardinia Park, as a "trial". The services were along the lines advocated by the Geelong Branch.

At all the planning meetings at Kardinia Park to organise the night footy arrangements, the PTV representative, sadly backed up by one of the bus company managers, consistently claimed the providing any services was too expensive. At a post-match briefing, PTV said it had been put off by the poor use of the special bus services provided during the UCI cycling championships in Geelong in 2010.

The revelation that services would be provided was casually made by a bus company representative at the end of an unrelated meeting four days before the match. You might think he'd be keen to let people know. We have no idea why the situation changed, but undoubtedly getting a front-page story about the problem in the "Geelong Advertiser" a week or so previously, courtesy of journalist Grant Payne, had a big influence.

Five existing routes (out of 21) were run by two services each

which left the stops at South Geelong station after the game about 15 minutes apart. Unfortunately the late notice meant that publicity was inadequate, with the only concrete information being on the bus companies' websites. Not even a map of the chosen routes was published in newspapers. We hoped the trial had not been set up to fail.



Over 100 people used the services after the first game, although the second service on each route was poorly used and will be discontinued.

PTV thought patronage was disappointing, but we and the bus companies reckoned it was very pleasing, given all the circumstances.

It is very ironic that we've gone from potentially having no services after night games, to having services that are, at least to some extent, better targeted than the ones before the game, because the latter only run the inadequate

Saturday evening timetable, which takes no account of the times which passengers might prefer to get to the game.

It is good that PTV conducted random interviews with footy spectators on the night, particularly related to transport to and from the match. We doubt that these sorts of statistics have ever been sought before in Geelong by DoT/PTV.

## G21 Public Transport Strategy

The consultation process provided by consultants AECOM for the latest G21 Public Transport Strategy was much better than for the previous one because sessions were open to the general public. Participation could have been higher, but it's hard to schedule sessions to suit everyone.

It was good so many PTUA members attended the Geelong session in the Geelong West Town Hall.

After hearing from and talking to the people most involved in formulating the forthcoming plan, it seems we can be reasonably hopeful that the need for frequent and direct services is well accepted. AECOM now has until the start of July to submit its report to G21.

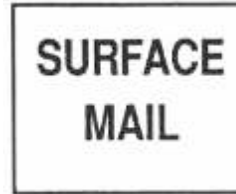
# PTUA News

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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). Call 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.