THE PLACE TO BE ON PT

A VISION FOR GREATER MELBOURNE'S TRANSPORT

COALITION FOR PEOPLE'S TRANSPORT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Coalition for People's Transport includes representatives of community and social justice organisations, environment groups, local government, trade unions, disability advocates and transport users. All have contributed valuable input and advice to inform these recommendations and ensure they are a broadly held perspective on Melbourne transport needs.

We particularly thank Kate Colvin from the Victorian Council of Social Service for coordinating the development of the vision and writing this paper and Cathy McNaughton from Environment Victoria for developing the sections on urban planning, active transport and environment and for championing and supporting the process.

This vision represents the beginning of a strategy to increase awareness of more livable transport options and encourage change in community and government decision processes towards public transport and active transport.

The Coalition for People's Transport encourages you to actively support this vision.

ISBN 1-8760461-3-9

Copies are available from:
Victorian Council of Social Service
Level 6, 130 Little Collins St
Melbourne VIC 3000,
Australia
tel: +61.3.9654 5050
fax: +61.3.9654 5749
email: vcoss@vcoss.org.au
website: www.vcoss.org.au

Author: Coalition for People's Transport
Edited by: Neil Conning
Graphic design: Lorna Hendry
Image on cover courtesy of the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation

The views outlined in this paper are the combined view of the Coalition for People's Transport and may differ from specific policies of Coalition members.

THE PLACE TO BE ON PT

A VISION FOR GREATER MELBOURNE'S TRANSPORT

Photo courtesy of Stefan Lademann

CHAPTER ONE
Introduction

An accessible, safe and effective transport system – of trains, trams, buses, roads, cars and footpaths – is essential to community life. Transport brings us together for social activities, work, shopping, recreation and enabling civic and religious participation to occur.

In 2004, Victoria sits at a crossroad for transport planning. The Coalition for People's Transport has been formed to create and promote a transport vision that is sustainable, responsive to community needs and guarantees our State's future livability.

The Coalition brings together community and social justice organisations, environment groups, local government, trade unions, disability advocates and transport users.

This document explores the community's transport options and proposes a vision for an effective and sustainable transport system.

TRANSPORT ACCESS: A RIGHT OF ALL VICTORIANS

Safe, accessible and affordable transport is essential to enable people to exercise their rights to work, education and wellbeing: if you can't *get* to school, a job, services or friends and family your right of access is denied. Transport is as fundamental to our rights as the provision of schools and hospitals.

These rights are specified in the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, which states:

>> *Everyone has the right to work.* ARTICLE 23

>> *Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself [sic] and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services . . .* ARTICLE 25

>> *Everyone has the right to education.* ARTICLE 26

At least one in three Melburnians are not able to drive, and seven per cent of households own no motorised vehicles.[1] Non-drivers include many people with disabilities, young people under the legal driving age, those who cannot afford car ownership and older Senior Victorians.

These people must be able to use public transport if their rights to access employment, education, services and community life are to be fulfilled.

MELBOURNE 2030: PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

>> *Victorians are passionate about public transport.*
MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, PETER BACHELOR IN THE SUNDAY AGE, 23 FEBRUARY 2003

>> *The single most powerful issue to emerge from the public consultation [for Melbourne 2030] was that of public transport.*[2]

Melbourne 2030: Planning for Sustainable Growth is the State Government's strategic plan for Melbourne to 2030. Thousands of Melburnians attended the consultations held to inform *Melbourne 2030* and called for public transport to be improved.

People want public transport that is accessible, safer, more frequent and affordable and is available in Melbourne's outer suburbs. People also want vibrant local communities in which walking and cycling are safe and easy and children can walk safely to school.

The *Melbourne 2030* consultations highlighted that many people feel Melbourne is losing the great qualities that have earned the city international acclaim.[3] The community consultation directly linked growing pollution and congestion to growth in car use.

The State Government's strategic vision documents, *Growing Victoria Together* and *Melbourne 2030*, commit the Government to increase public transport from nine to 20 per cent of motorised trips within Melbourne by 2020, and to implementing a radical expansion of the network of roads and freeways.[4]

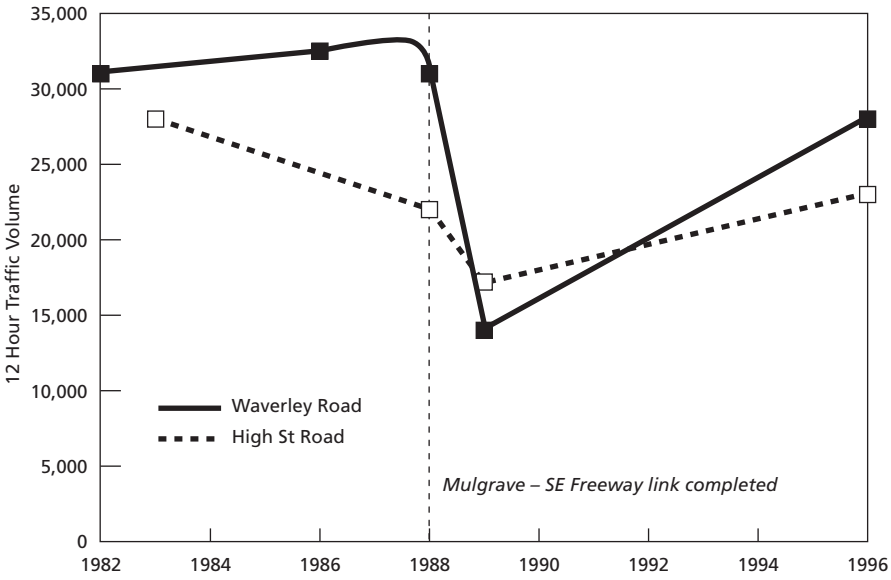
LOCAL EXPERIENCE

>> *Widening roads to ease traffic congestion is like trying to cure obesity by loosening your belt.*[5]

Melbourne 2030 proposes both a radical expansion of roads and freeways and public transport improvements, but fails to articulate an integrated vision for a whole transport system. Evidence suggests that the two plans – one for roads and one for public transport – are contradictory. Expansion of roads and freeways undermine the effectiveness of public transport by diverting potential public transport users into cars and by increasing congestion.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 'Building more roads has not noticeably reduced congestion – new road space is quickly filled.'[6] This experience is true of new roads developed in Melbourne. The chart below illustrates how congestion quickly reasserted itself on roads parallel to Monash Freeway after the freeway's construction.

>> TRAFFIC LEVELS ON ROADS PARALLEL TO MONASH FREEWAY[7]



SOURCE: ARRB TRANSPORT RESEARCH, REPORT NO. 299, FIGURE 10

While new roads may initially speed trips from outer suburbs to the city centre, the increased traffic then becomes snarled in streets around the city, creating traffic jams that slow trams and buses as well as cars.

TRANSPORT CHOICES AND SOCIAL COSTS AND BENEFITS

>> *How cars are managed is critical to public health – and much more important than we previously realised – we need to repopulate the streets.*

DR ROB MOODIE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, VICHEALTH

>> *Road trauma costs the Victorian community around $1.8 billion each year, plus unquantifiable social costs.*

VICTORIAN MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, THE HON. PETER BATCHELOR, MP[8]

Streets with few cars are safer and more enjoyable than streets with a lot of traffic creating noise, pollution and danger to pedestrians. According to VicHealth, Victoria's health promotion body, car centred suburbs are 'obesogenic' (fattening) and foster depression and isolation by discouraging social interaction, walking and cycling.[9]

By contrast, public transport use encourages walking and community interaction. Most public transport users walk to and from the train, tram or bus. Just walking 20 to 30 minutes daily to access public transport provides the recommended amount of gentle exercise to maintain good health.

Concerns for children's safety have led many parents to drive their children to school instead of allowing them to walk. Frequent driving of children is associated with childhood obesity and growing numbers of traffic accidents around schools.[10] Being driven also denies children and adolescents the independence and confidence gained by independent travel. In 2003, only 25 per cent of children in Melbourne walked to primary school and 68 per cent went in 'mum's taxi'. Consequently, 'mum's taxi' has become the fastest growing type of trip in Melbourne.[11]

The walking school bus mobilises volunteers to accompany children for a safe walk to the school gate.
PHOTO COURTESY OF THE VICTORIAN HEALTH PROMOTION FOUNDATION

The Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV) estimates it costs $172 per week to run a new medium-sized car.[12] In Melbourne, it is low-income households who most need second or third cars, as they are most likely to be living in outer suburbs where public transport is limited or non-existent. The high rate of multiple car ownership among low-income households is reflected in statistics that show car ownership costs consume 13 per cent of average incomes, but 28 per cent of the incomes of low-income earners.[13]

Public transport that lets workers relax as they commute and guarantees reliable arrival times minimises households' need of second cars.

Public transport is also important to enable people who cannot drive to be involved in community life and active socially. The State Government's Review of Women's Health and Wellbeing (2002) identified that many older women experience social isolation because they are unable to drive and do not use public transport because of safety and accessibility concerns, or simply because there is none available near their home.[14] Social isolation is also a problem for many other people unable to drive.

During the past five years, more than 30,000 people in Victoria were seriously injured in road crashes and went to hospital.[15] In 2002 alone, 397 people were killed in road crashes.[16] While the urban road toll in terms of fatalities is falling (although still at unacceptable levels) the number of serious injuries is rising.

TRANSPORT CHOICES AND ECONOMIC COSTS AND BENEFITS

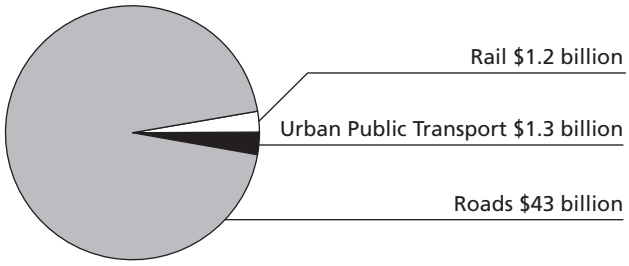
It is a common assumption that car use is a private cost and only public transport is subsidised. In reality, both public and private transport are subsidised by taxes, and car dependence costs more overall.

Recent research shows that the total costs of cars exceed public transport costs by 30 to 40 per cent and are not paid for by users.[17] These costs include the direct costs of road building and road maintenance, as well as the road toll and illness and deaths caused by respiratory conditions connected to traffic-generated air pollution.

Australian governments consistently provide higher subsidies to car use than to public transport. The 2004–05 State Budget included a $422.7 million funding boost for new and upgraded roads, mainly in outer growth suburbs and rural and regional Victoria and no funding for new public transport infrastructure.[18]

Between 1975 and 1998, the Federal Government spent $28 on roads for every dollar spent on public transport. As illustrated in Chart 2, this included $43 billion on roads, $1.2 billion on rail and $1.3 billion on urban public transport.[19] In recent years, federal expenditure has been almost entirely directed to roads.

>> PROPORTIONAL SPENDING ALLOCATIONS ON TRANSPORT BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, 1975–98



If present trends in population growth and transport use continue, by 2015 urban car travel will have increased by 30 per cent and the cost of congestion in Australia's major cities will have risen from around $13 billion to $30 billion a year.[20]

>> TOTAL COSTS OF ROAD TRANSPORT TO THE COMMUNITY[21]

ROAD-RELATED EXPENDITURE IN AUSTRALIA 1999	$ BILLION
Road construction and maintenance	7
Road accidents	15
Pollution and other health costs	1.75
Congestion costs	12.75
Road damage	1.3
Total	**37.8**
INCOME TO GOVERNMENT (STATE AND FEDERAL)	$ BILLION
Fuel excise and registration	15
Total	**15**
Road deficit	**22.8**

TRANSPORT CHOICES AND ENVIRONMENTAL COSTS AND BENEFITS

>> *Motor vehicles are the major source of urban air pollutants. In Melbourne, their emissions contribute 83 per cent of the carbon monoxide, 41 per cent of hydrocarbons and 63 per cent of nitrogen oxide levels in the air.*

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (VICTORIA) [22]

Deaths in Melbourne from conditions directly related to air pollution are more than three times the number of annual deaths from road crashes.[23] In addition to damaging health, motor vehicle emissions also contribute to global warming. One quarter of the total greenhouse gas emissions from Victoria come from the transport sector, of which two thirds is from private cars. In 2002, the State Government called on the Federal Government to ratify the Kyoto Protocol limiting greenhouse emissions to only an eight per cent increase on 1990 emissions. However, as

projected growth in car use in Victoria is far in excess of the Kyoto target, sceptics could argue the State Government is not serious about maximising its own role in limiting emissions.

Car use also threatens Melbourne's remaining green spaces and local beauty spots, including creeks and grasslands, through the construction of roads. Current road plans on the VicRoads blueprint for roads and freeways would cut directly through Melbourne's remaining green spaces. As each park is made smaller or lost, Victorians have less local spaces to enjoy.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

If car use and congestion continue to grow unimpeded, Melbourne's future transport options will be reduced. In London, a tax of £5 on cars accessing London's central business area has been levied to reduce congestion. In Bangkok, toll roads have been constructed to provide swift transit for toll road users. In both instances, separate grades of road congestion have been created for wealthier road users.

Crudely applied congestion taxes or increased fuel costs in Melbourne would particularly disadvantage low-income residents, doubly penalising people for being excluded from the public transport net. Low-income residents in urban fringe suburbs with poor transport services have little or no choice but to rely on cars to get around. They also have least capacity to pay tolls.

Failure to provide adequate public transport alters how cities grow and develop. In cities like Los Angeles, which has very poor public transport and an extensive freeway system, most shopping and employment centres are found off freeways. To service these centres, buses must take long and winding routes on and off the freeway. Developments of this kind are becoming established in some areas of Melbourne. However, better planning decisions made now could halt the growth of this kind of unsustainable development.

Successful transport networks with high usage and swift and predictable travel times have been achieved in cities with comparable densities to Melbourne, including Vancouver and Toronto in Canada and Zurich in Switzerland. These success stories have been achieved by governments who made visionary investments and tough decisions so public transport became a *more* efficient travel option than car use for most trips. This is a challenge for Melbourne, where the Government has articulated this visionary goal, but is yet to demonstrate a commitment to the investment needed to realise it.

>> **VOTING FOR SPACE TO MOVE – A STORY FROM COLOMBIA[24]**

After frustration at a rising road toll, choked streets, and unbearable pollution, the citizens of Bogota, Colombia voted in a referendum to switch resources away from road building to an intensive program of building cycling and pedestrian-only routes, including a car-free route 17 kilometres long. Parks were built on derelict land, canals cleaned up and car-free days implemented.

More than 125 kilometres of main roads are now closed for seven hours every Sunday. As a result, each Sunday up to two million people come out to enjoy the clean air, the freedom and the safe environment. In 2002, a car-free day was set up and seven million people went to work without a car. In a subsequent poll 82 per cent supported the concept.

Photo courtesy of the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation

CHAPTER TWO

The Place to be on PT

A Vision for Greater Melbourne's Transport

In order for public transport to be effective in playing a pivotal role in mass transit, it needs to be improved to be **SAFER** and **FASTER**.

SAFER

SAFE	Public transport on which people are safe from injury and harassment.
AFFORDABLE	Public transport that is affordable for all.
FRIENDLY	Public transport with helpful and friendly staff that facilitate spontaneous conversation between strangers and a friendly, safe environment.
EASY	Public transport that is simple and easy to use, with the provision of clear, understandable and relevant information.
RESPONSIVE	Public transport operators that meet the needs of the communities in which they operate, reply promptly to queries and resolve complaints.

FASTER

FREQUENT	Public transport that is fast and operates at high frequency, 20 hours a day, 7 days a week.
ACCESSIBLE	Public transport that is accessible to all, including people with disabilities, the elderly and people with prams, shopping or small children.
SUSTAINABLE	Public transport that is economically and environmentally sustainable beyond the term of the government in power.
THERE	Public transport that is near your home and gets you to where you want to go.
EXCELLENT	Public transport with high standards of cleanliness and comfort.
RELIABLE	Public transport that is consistently punctual and travel times that are predictable.

Victoria's public transport system falls short of the SAFER and FASTER transport standards. To improve the system to a standard that ensures people will want to use it in preference to their car, we need to take the following actions.

Photo courtesy of Stefan Lademann

III

CHAPTER THREE

Actions to ensure Melbourne's future as a livable and sustainable city

ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACROSS ALL OF MELBOURNE

>> *Most days there are people hitching because there's no bus – often to TAFE or university.*

MARCIA LEONARD, KINGLAKE RESIDENT ON COMMUTING BY CAR

Public transport across Melbourne is not distributed evenly, with many suburbs – particularly in growth corridors – poorly served by public transport.

People travelling into and out of these suburbs must rely on cars, causing local congestion and multiplying the congestion in areas with better public transport. Reducing car and road freight–dependence across the whole city is critical to Melbourne's future livability, health and economic development.

Suburbs that are poorly serviced by public transport are also relatively economically disadvantaged. Consequently, households that can least afford multiple car ownership, are most reliant on cars.[25]

>> RELATIVE CAR AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT USE IN MELBOURNE

	CORE	OUTER FRINGE
Percentage households with incomes over $70,000	12	6
Car use	2.12	3.92
Public transport use	0.66	0.21

PROFESSOR PETER NEWMAN, PRESENTATION AT YARRA PUBLIC TRANSPORT FORUM, 19 NOVEMBER 2003.

In *Melbourne 2030*, the Government acknowledges that 'many people cannot afford a place to live that is close to transport, employment, education and other services [and that] emerging pockets of disadvantage have the potential to weaken the fabric of our community.'[26]

The delineation of a growth boundary in *Melbourne 2030* provides an opportunity for planners to address this problem and plan provision of public transport infrastructure across the whole city. Putting the appropriate infrastructure in place in a timely way would enable the Government to achieve its *Melbourne 2030* vision to 'concentrate urban expansion into growth areas that are served by high-capacity public transport.'[27]

To achieve this vision *Melbourne 2030* needs to move beyond being a statement of intent to include effective planning with an explicitly funded investment strategy.

Integrated planning

Planning processes for achieving a livable Melbourne

To achieve the type of city we want with destinations and housing accessible by public transport, land use and transport must be planned together to be an integrated system. Currently, the Public Transport Division of the Department of Infrastructure (DOI) plans public transport, VicRoads plans roads and the Department of Sustainability and Environment have control over land use and urban planning. VicRoads' traffic priorities consistently take precedence over land-use, pedestrian and public transport objectives.

Transport planning processes could be better streamlined if transport planning was directed from a single Government planning unit with responsibility for both land-use and transport planning.

To achieve this, VicRoads would need to be absorbed into the transport division, and a single transport budget allocated for all transport modes. The transport division should be directed by land-use planning functions in the same department. This was recommended by the Infrastructure Planning Council in 2002 as a strategy to enable Government to make optimal social, economic and environmental transport choices.[28]

For a planning process to meet the changing needs of the population, local communities must be involved in the planning cycle through community forums and consultations.

There needs also to be opportunity for independent review of road and transport proposals. Reviews should consider plans according to triple bottom line outcomes, including community benefits, environment, land-use planning, travel demand management and sustainable transport alternatives. This could be achieved by extending the mandate of the Victorian planning system of independent panels reviewing land-use decisions to transport decisions.

RECOMMENDATION 1

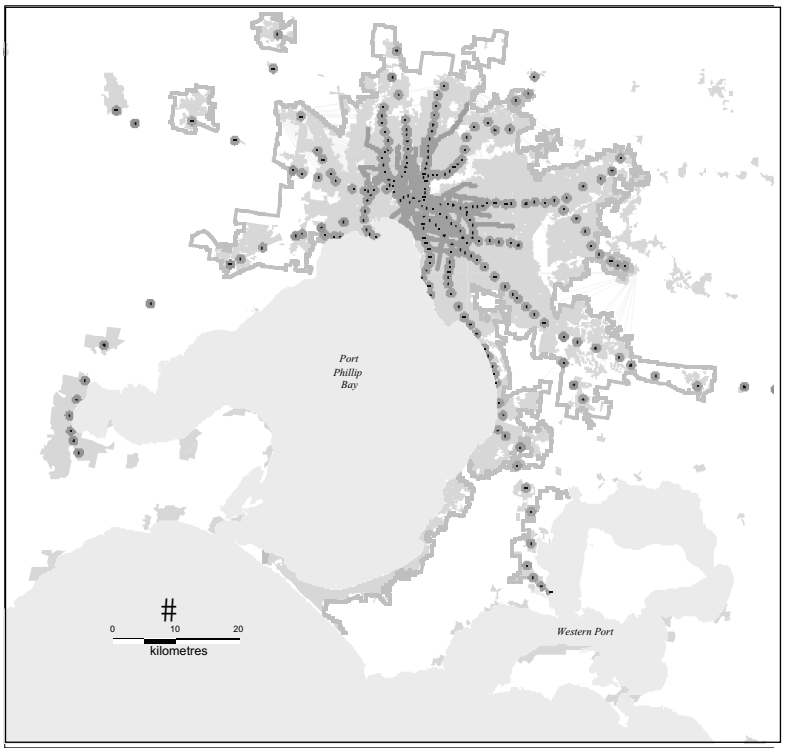
The Coalition for People's Transport calls on the State Government to develop a single integrated land-use and transport planning process incorporating planning for land use and development, roads, public transport, cycling and walking. This process should:

- Involve local communities in decision-making.
- Be led by a land-use planning agency incorporating a transport division responsible for all transport modes.
- Apply land-use planning provisions to transport decisions.
- Involve independent review of transport and road proposals that takes account of social, economic and environmental issues.

>> ACCESS TO MELBOURNE'S PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM

Over two-thirds of Melbourne can only be serviced by bus services since rail and tram services lie considerable distances from where people live or where they want to travel to.

In 1996, the Metropolitan strategy team identified that 2.16 million Melburnians lived in areas where buses were the only means of transport. 0.98 million lived within access distance of rail services



LEGEND

Areas of Melbourne with access to public transport within 400m metres

MELBOURNE 2030: PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

An integrated land-use and transport plan

A whole-of-city vision for transport that meets social, environmental, economic and cultural objectives should guide these planning processes. *Melbourne 2030* outlines some elements of such a vision. However, the inclusion of two potentially contradictory plans for roads and public transport undermines *Melbourne 2030*'s overall coherence. Much of *Melbourne 2030* continues to assume the city will be based around the car and car-based shopping centres such as Chadstone.

Melbourne's plan should progressively ensure that most people have seven-day access to frequent public transport 400–500 metres from their home, and that no Melburnians are more than one kilometre from public transport. This is consistent with the *Melbourne 2030* plan for activity centres.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Coalition for People's Transport calls on the State Government to develop a Melbourne-wide integrated land-use and transport plan including roads, public transport, cycling and walking in close consultation with local communities.

- The plan should ensure that by 2009, 75% of Melbourne residents have seven-day access to frequent public transport within 500 metres of their home, and 90% have access within one kilometre.
- By 2014, 90% of Melburnians have access to frequent public transport within 500 metres of their home, and 100% have access within one kilometre.

Planning for new developments

In 2003, Australian Ministers for Transport and Ministers for Planning endorsed the *National Charter for Integrated Land-use and Transport Planning*.[29] This committed Ministers to planning destinations and neighbourhoods and then building the required infrastructure. It also established a framework to ensure traffic is subservient to the needs of pedestrians, bicycles and public transport in local neighbourhoods. The Victorian Minister for Planning, The Hon. Mary Delahunty reinforced this commitment by promising 'to build new communities with transport and community facilities built into development, rather than as afterthoughts to bare subdivisions'.[30]

However, Melbourne's new subdivisions are continuing to be built outside the public transport network, with no timeframe for the delivery of public transport or other services. This undermines the viability of public transport in the longer-term as households are unlikely to switch to public transport once they have already bought second and third cars.

Developers, who profit from new subdivisions, should contribute to the cost of new infrastructure provided to subdivisions, including the cost of public transport.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Coalition for People's Transport calls on the State Government to develop integrated plans for public transport services, cycling and pedestrian use in and around new developments in consultation with local communities, local councils and developers. These plans should:

- Ensure public transport is made available to new developments as soon as the first stage of development is occupied.
- Require developers to contribute to the cost of public transport for new housing or business developments without access to public transport.

Strategic transport investments

Public transport infrastructure investments are urgently needed to expand public transport services into growth areas. In some areas of Melbourne, public transport plans have already been developed with local community involvement, but new transport infrastructure has not yet eventuated to meet the identified community needs. The projects outlined below have been identified in these community-based processes and represent core infrastructure that is essential to a Melbourne-wide integrated plan.[31]

Train investments

Electrified rail is the most effective means to connect suburbs to the city. This connectivity is critical to the efficiency of Melbourne's labour market and to the distribution of opportunities. The train extensions and upgrades recommended below are important additions to the existing network that will bring outer suburban residents and job opportunities closer together.

In some existing line segments, including Footscray to Sunshine and Caulfied to Dandenong, limited track capacity is the cause of serious overcrowding. More people would use these services if they ran more frequently. Capacity improvements are a priority to enable service frequencies to be increased and encourage car users into trains.

IV

RECOMMENDATION 4

The Coalition for People's Transport calls on the State Government to invest in the following urgent priority capital improvements to the train network:

TRAINS PHASE 1 (2005–2010)

Northern Corridor

- Epping line extensions to Epping North and to Mernda to service fast growing residential communities.
- Addition of Coolaroo station to the Broadmeadows to Craigieburn electrification project to service large new residential suburbs.

Eastern Corridor

- Extension of the East Doncaster line from Victoria Park to East Doncaster along the Eastern Freeway median. This service would fill the gap between the Eltham and Ringwood Lines and avert further congestion on the Eastern Freeway. High capacity light rail could be considered as an alternative.
- Extension of the Rowville line from Huntingdale station to Stud Park Shopping Centre in Rowville. This service would fill the public transport gap through Wheelers Hill and Knox and service both Monash University and the Wellington Business Park; major trip generators that are currently poorly served by public transport. High capacity light rail could be considered as an alternative.
- Cranbourne to Cranbourne East extension to service the Cranbourne urban growth corridor.

Western Corridor

- Footscray to Sunshine signalling upgrade to enable trains to run every three minutes. Timetable redesign is also needed on this line to increase compatibility between suburban and regional fast trains.
- Sydenham to Sunbury electrification to continue the existing electrification program.
- Sunshine to Melton line duplication and electrification. These would improve services to the western growth corridors and satellite suburbs of Melton and Sunbury that are currently very poorly served by public transport and would improve fast rail services to Ballarat and Bendigo.

Southern Corridor

- Electrification from Frankston to Baxter to increase train usage along the existing diesel line, now heavily urbanised.
- Caulfield to Dandenong signalling upgrade to enable trains to run every three minutes. Timetable redesign is also needed on this line to increase compatibility between suburban and regional fast trains.

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Coalition for People's Transport calls on the State Government to invest in the following mid-term priority capital improvements to the train network:

TRAINS PHASE 2 (2010–2015)

Northern Corridor

- Epping line extensions from Mernda to Whittlesea to service new subdivisions in Whittlesea and improve the interface between northern rural towns and urban areas.
- Upfield line electrification to Craigieburn to reduce traffic on Sydney Road.

Southern Corridor

- Duplicate and electrify Frankston Line to Mornington via Leawarra (Monash University).
- Caulfield to Dandenong installation of a third track to further increase capacity.

Western Corridor

- Airport Train from Albion to Tullamarine to incorporate Tullamarine Airport, Melbourne's second biggest trip generator after the city centre, into the MET train network.

Smart Bus

Two successful Smart Bus pilot projects have been in operation on Springvale and Blackburn Roads in Melbourne's east. These services have increased patronage by 30 per cent by providing accessibility, short waiting times between buses, speed of travel and improved linkages to trains.

The lessons from the Smart Bus pilot projects should inform the development of Melbourne's complete bus network. In particular, that buses should be linked with trains to increase the integration of all public transport. One in six Smart Bus passengers are travelling between train stations, and an even greater proportion are travelling between an origin or destination and a train station.

RECOMMENDATION 6

The Coalition for People's Transport calls on the State Government to expand the Smart Bus pilots to include:

- An orbital route from the east along Warrigal Road, north to Station Street and Manningham Road, west along Bell Street through Sunshine and south to Millers Road in Altona.
- A north–south route in the east along Stud Road connecting Dandenong in the south to Ringwood in the north.
- A north–south route in the west connecting Highpoint to Williamstown along Rosamond Road, Williamstown Road and Melbourne Road.
- Extension of Smart Bus to key inner, middle, outer and fringe routes.

Local buses

The majority of local bus services throughout Melbourne have poor service standards, including:

- Long waiting times between services.
- Services that stop at 7 pm and don't operate on Sundays.
- Poorly signposted bus stops without shelters or information.
- Services that are not integrated with train services.
- Services with outdated or undesirable routes.
- Timetables that are only available in small print.
- Timetables that do not indicate when low-floor buses are scheduled.

Melbourne's bus network is notoriously difficult to use for new or infrequent users, as the Government's contracts with bus service providers only require timetable information to be provided on every third bus stop. Even fewer stops provide route maps and many bus stops do not clearly indicate the routes using the stop. Large format route maps and timetable information for buses should be available at all bus stops, at shopping centres and libraries, on community information boards and at all transport interchanges such as train stations or tram stops that connect train with bus or tram with bus. Bus companies should also be encouraged to frequently advertise their services in local papers.

Guidelines for bus stop design have been developed by VicRoads with input from users, operators, the Government and drivers. These guidelines should be adopted immediately for construction of all new bus stops and progressive upgrades of older bus stops.

>> *Left work 7 pm, waited for bus till 7.30 pm, it came along with steps so could not board it. Waited till 8. Another bus came I couldn't get on. I finally got a taxi and got home at 8.30 pm.*
BRENDA RAWLINS, CITY WORKER AND BULLEEN RESIDENT

In 2003, approximately one third of Melbourne's buses were accessible low-floor vehicles. However, most bus companies provide no information on their timetables to indicate when low-floor buses are scheduled. Consequently people must simply wait and hope for a low-floor bus.

A survey of bus services in April 2003 identified that out of 286 bus timetables across 31 different operators, 11 routes had low-floor buses timetabled; 69 routes planned to have low-floor buses timetabled by the end of 2003; 18 out of 31 bus companies required people to call on the day, or the night before – or in some cases the night before and again on the day, to find out when low-floor buses are running; and two bus companies offered the option of requesting a low-floor bus at a specific time.

A system that requires people to call to identify when low-floor buses are scheduled is only useful for trips planned in advance. Many trips are spontaneous or begin at an indeterminate time. The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) requires that access for people with disabilities be provided on the same basis as for other people. Consequently, not providing a timetable for low-floor buses when a general timetable is available is discriminatory. It also means bus companies are missing out on patronage from potential users.[32]

An overhaul of local bus services is needed to address these issues. Additional resources will be needed to improve waiting times and upgrade bus infrastructure. However, reform of the structure of the Government's contracts with bus service providers is also needed. A renegotiation of these contracts should ensure buses are routed where they are most needed, that services are integrated with train services and that all bus stops provide timetable and route information, including indicating when low floor buses are scheduled.

In some areas with lower population densities, bus services may be more effective if they provide a mixed fixed route and demand responsive service. An example of this is in place in some new estates in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne where small, low-floor buses operate a fixed route service at normal public transport fares but also pick people up from their home for a small extra surcharge.[33]

RECOMMENDATION 7

The Coalition for People's Transport calls on the State Government to fundamentally redesign the bus network in consultation with local communities to ensure that:

- Buses are routed where they are most needed.
- Bus service standards improve.
- Bus services are integrated with train services.
- Bus stops are progressively upgraded to meet the VicRoads guidelines.
- Bus information is available at all bus stops and transport interchanges, community locations, such as shopping centres and libraries, and in local papers.
- Bus companies are required to indicate the schedule of low-floor buses on all timetables.

Trams

Trams are a much-loved feature of Melbourne's public transport system. The State Government is to be commended for maintaining the existing tram network and the extensions initiated on some routes. However, like some train services, tram routes in central Melbourne face service capacity constraints. Tram routes in the central city and connections to Southbank should be reviewed to enable tram usage to increase.

Melbourne also has untapped potential to use tram and light rail services as an alternative to bus services in newer suburbs. Investment in fixed track infrastructure enhances the viability of suburban hubs as centres for employment, education, shopping and recreation. Trams could be

used in suburban areas to support high-patronage routes centred on local activity centres. Suburban trams are successful in European cities with population densities similar to Melbourne.

A model suburban activity centre and transport hub, including a local tram hub should be developed in a growth area like Dandenong to demonstrate *Melbourne 2030*'s urban design principles.[34] If successful, the model could be extended to replace bus services in appropriate areas feeding Melbourne's other major activity centres.

Further extensions along tram routes are also needed to reach the tram network into growth areas and connect appropriately to the rail network.

RECOMMENDATION 8

The Coalition for People's Transport calls on the State Government to increase usage of trams by:

- Improving linkages between trams and other transport modes by extending Melbourne's tram services to connect with trains.
- Extending key tram routes to growth corridors.
- Evaluating a model suburban activity centre and transport hub, including a local tram hub to demonstrate the urban design principles outlined in *Melbourne 2030*.
- Reviewing the central city tram routes to increase capacity and better connect Southbank.

ACTIVE TRANSPORT

Active forms of transport including walking, cycling and wheelchair use are our most important forms of transport. VicHealth and the Heart Foundation recommend walking as a part of daily life and as a key means of reducing obesity and depression. By walking, cycling or using a wheelchair in local communities, people maintain local social connections and local infrastructure such as shops, creating safer, more livable and sustainable communities.[35] For the purposes of this paper pedestrians include people walking, using wheelchairs and walking with prams.

Walking and wheelchair use

All public transport journeys begin or end with travel as a pedestrian. Consequently, enhancing pedestrian access to and from public transport is an important strategy for increasing public transport patronage. Research in the United Kingdom has identified that there is a direct link between bus patronage and the quality of pedestrian access to bus stops.[36]

Currently 15 to 16 per cent of trips are made on foot, not including trips in which people walk to and from public transport.[37] More than 60 per cent of Melbourne's public transport passengers have a walking trip as their main means of getting to the start of their public transport journey. Following from the State Government's promise to double public transport trips by 2020, the Government should also commit to doubling pedestrian travel.

Melbourne 2030 recognises that attractive walking environments are essential to maintaining active and sustainable local communities and outlines positive design strategies to enhance pedestrian safety and amenity. This was reinforced by the 2003 *Providing for Pedestrians* report to the Department of Infrastructure (DOI) that argued pedestrian spaces must be connected, comfortable, convenient, convivial and conspicuous.[38] Nonetheless, pedestrian amenity and safety is threatened by *Melbourne 2030*'s general orientation towards increasing car use.

Local areas that are safe and enjoyable for pedestrians should have:

- Paths or 'accessways' that are wide enough for two wheelchairs or prams to pass.[39]
- Evenly surfaced paths without barriers.

Photo courtesy of the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation

- Path gradients that can be easily negotiated by wheelchair users
- Streets characterised by people and not dominated by cars.
- Traffic-free areas.
- Local destinations, including shops, local parks and beauty spots within 800 metres of homes.
- Public transport stops placed for easy access to shops.
- Safe crossings at roads and train level crossings.
- Passive supervision from 'people spaces' near to paths such as shops.
- Clear lines of sight to destinations and with paths that take a direct route.

Currently a proliferation of bodies have responsibility for different paths, including VicRoads and/or local councils for street side footpaths, Parks Victoria for paths through parks, and shopping centre management for paths through shopping centres and centre parking areas. While no single design standard exists for all paths, the Municipal Association of Victoria is developing accessway guidelines that should be universally adopted.

Improved guidelines and maintenance standards are also needed for pedestrian railway crossings. In 2001, Christopher Jones and Irena Gilewski were both killed by trains at level crossings after their wheelchairs became stuck. The State Coroner's recommendations included that the State Government should:[40]

- Improve railway crossing design to be consistent with Universal Design Principles.[41]
- Involve the disabled community at all levels of work on the issue of safety at pedestrian crossings.
- Develop a universal maintenance and audit standard for the identification and repair of safety problems associated with the surface surrounding level crossings.
- Develop standardised incident and near-miss reporting and investigation systems.

To improve Melbourne's walkability, reform of road and land-use planning is needed as well as improved design of pedestrian accessways. Current road management practices often fail to meet the needs of pedestrians as they compromise the connectivity, convenience and safety of walking. High vehicle speeds and traffic volumes are alienating and disruptive, as well as being exceptionally dangerous. Lower urban vehicle speeds improve urban amenity and quality of life and encourage walking and cycling.

RECOMMENDATION 9

The Coalition for People's Transport calls on the State Government to develop a walking and wheelchair use plan for Melbourne in collaboration with communities and councils that is integrated with motorised transport plans. The plan should include strategies to:

- Encourage street design that is safe and amenable for walking and cycling with:
  - Safe crossings of streets and railway lines.
  - Adequate lighting and visibility of street areas from active 'people spaces' such as shops, especially close to public transport stops and access routes.
  - Paths or accessways that are free of barriers, have even surfaces and are wide enough for two wheelchairs or prams to pass.
  - Path and accessway gradients that can be easily negotiated by wheelchair users.
  - Road space designs that reduce traffic volumes and speeds around schools, shopping areas and other busy pedestrian zones.
  - Entrances to train stations and other areas such as shops that prioritise direct access by pedestrians by locating car parks away from pedestrian accessways.
- Encourage local destinations, including shops, local parks and schools to be sited within 800 metres of homes.
- Create longer distance walking routes for healthy exercise and tourism.
- Fund local councils to undertake local pedestrian audits and develop local walking strategies.
- Implement all of the State Coroner's findings from the Wheelchair Pedestrian Railway Crossing Inquests.

Cycling

Many parts of Melbourne are relatively flat, creating an easy environment for cycling. With appropriate investment to make cyclists safer on the roads more short trips could be taken by bicycle instead of car. Currently car trips less than three kilometres in length represent 40 per cent of total car trips in Melbourne.[42]

Melbourne 2030 limits the State Government's commitment to cycling to completion of the Principal Bicycle Network by 2015 'funds permitting', despite that the funds needed to complete the bicycle network are negligible relative to the costs of road building. Given the importance of the network to improving Melbourne's bicycle environment and overall livability, a stronger commitment is needed from the State Government.

In addition to improving on-road safety for cycling, initiatives are also needed to improve the connectivity between cycling and public transport.

RECOMMENDATION 10

The Coalition for People's Transport calls on the State Government to double the metropolitan trips made by bicycle by 2020 by:

- Increasing the amenity of cycling for recreational and commuter use by completing the Principle Bicycle Network by 2015.
- Providing bike lanes on roads or cycle-friendly slow-speed roads and off-road paths to all activity centres and train stations.
- Providing 80% of Melburnians with access to an off-road path within 100 metres of their home.
- Installing secure bicycle parking and lockers at stations and end-of-trip facilities at destinations like workplaces, education, community and recreation centres.

Photo courtesy of Stefan Lademann

IV

CHAPTER 4

Actions to increase accessibility and improve safety of public transport

>> *Labor believes that all Victorians should have access to safe, reliable and affordable transport services. These transport services are vital to our economy, environment and quality of life.*

LISTENS THEN ACTS: LABOR'S PLAN FOR BUILDING A STRONGER AND FAIRER COMMUNITY IN VICTORIA (VICTORIAN ALP ELECTION POLICY 2002)

Many Victorians are unable to drive a car or to access any form of public transport. People in this situation must rely on family and friends to drive them around or become socially isolated.

Young people living in areas without seven-day public transport services are at particular risk of transport disadvantage as a lot of jobs available to young people, such as apprenticeships or hospitality work, require travel in the early morning, evening or on weekends, when public transport services are not always available. Lack of public transport after 7 pm also severely constrains people's social and community participation.[43]

According to VicHealth, Victoria's health promotion body, there is growing evidence that social isolation is damaging to people's health and wellbeing.[44] Conversely the evidence shows that social and community participation is one of the most important elements to an individual's health and wellbeing and to the strength of the community generally. VicHealth reaffirms what is common sense to people in the community[45] – that 'well-connected communities with strong social networks are more likely to benefit from lower crime figures, better health, higher educational achievement and better economic growth.'[46]

The importance of community participation and transport services that can be used by all Victorians was acknowledged in the 2002 Labor Party's election policy. These principles are repeated in many Government policies, including the Department of Victorian Communities Statement of Objectives, *Growing Victoria Together*, *Ageing in Place*, *Melbourne 2030*, *Respect – the Government's Vision for Young People* and the *State Disability Plan 2002–12*. The State Government also has an obligation, implicit in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights Article 25 (1948), to provide accessible transport options.

For the State Government to fulfil these commitments it needs to:

- Improve the availability of public transport.
- Improve the affordability of public transport.
- Improve the accessibility of public transport.
- Improve the safety of public transport.
- Recognise the importance of public transport availability when locating public and assisted housing.
- Improve complementary transport options, including community transport.

AFFORDABILITY

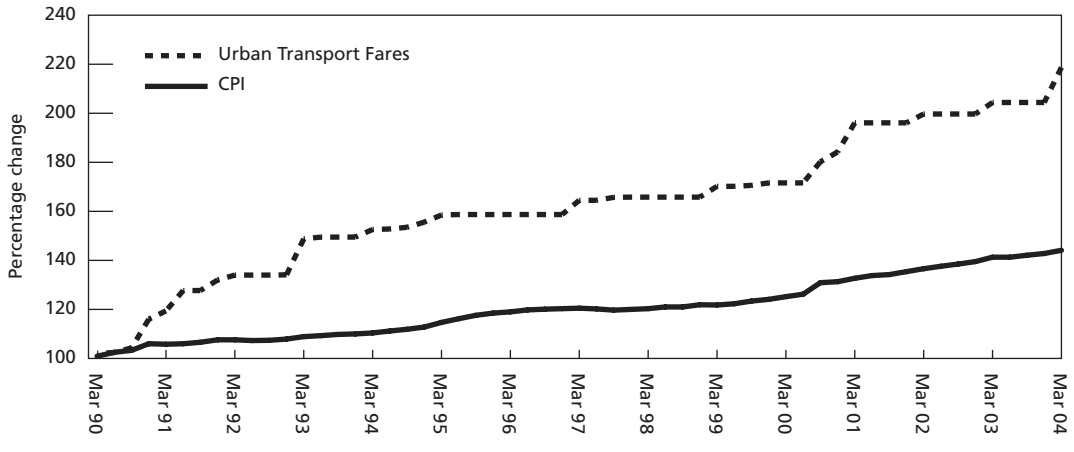
>> *If you can't afford transport, you can't do anything can ya . . .*
SAM, COBURG (2002)[47]

Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) research has identified that public transport is unaffordable for many low-income Victorians.[48] In December 2003, public transport fares in Melbourne were increased by over 11 per cent for many tickets and 76 per cent for short trip travellers.[49] These large price increases breach the Government commitment, made at the time of public transport privatisation, to not increase fares by more than inflation.[50]

The 2003 fare increase took the percentage of disposable income needed for five days travel to over 15 per cent of income for an unemployed person travelling in Zones 1, 2 and 3, and to 16 per cent of income for the same travel for a full-time worker on the federal minimum wage.

The increase in fares in 2004 continues a trend of public transport fares increasing at almost three times the rate of inflation. The graph below shows that urban transport fares, including trains, trams, buses and taxis increased by 118 per cent between 1990 and 2004, while inflation rose by only 44 per cent.[51]

>> PERCENTAGE CHANGES IN URBAN TRANSPORT COSTS



In the 2004–05 State Budget, the State Government improved the affordability of transport to many users by widening eligibility for concession fares to all Health Care cardholders. This addressed a longstanding anomaly by which many Health Care cardholders were not eligible for concession fares, despite being by definition low-income earners. The Budget also reduced the cost of access to transport concessions for tertiary students.

While welcome, these initiatives do not address the growing cost of transport fares. Research by VCOSS has revealed that transport costs prevent many people being able to participate in community life.[52] Recent research demonstrates that problems affording students' transport costs

impact negatively on school and TAFE attendance.[53] Ironically, the present system of student concessions privilege families who can most afford the upfront cost of yearly or six-monthly tickets. Families who cannot purchase these tickets must pay the more expensive daily fare.

Unless public transport is made more affordable, improved public transport networks and services will not be accessible to more members of the community.

RECOMMENDATION 11

The Coalition for People's Transport calls on the State Government to improve the affordability of public transport by:

- Renewing the commitment to not increase public transport fares in excess of inflation.
- Providing free travel on public transport to students with Health Care Cards and to the student dependants of Health Care cardholders.

DISABILITY ACCESS

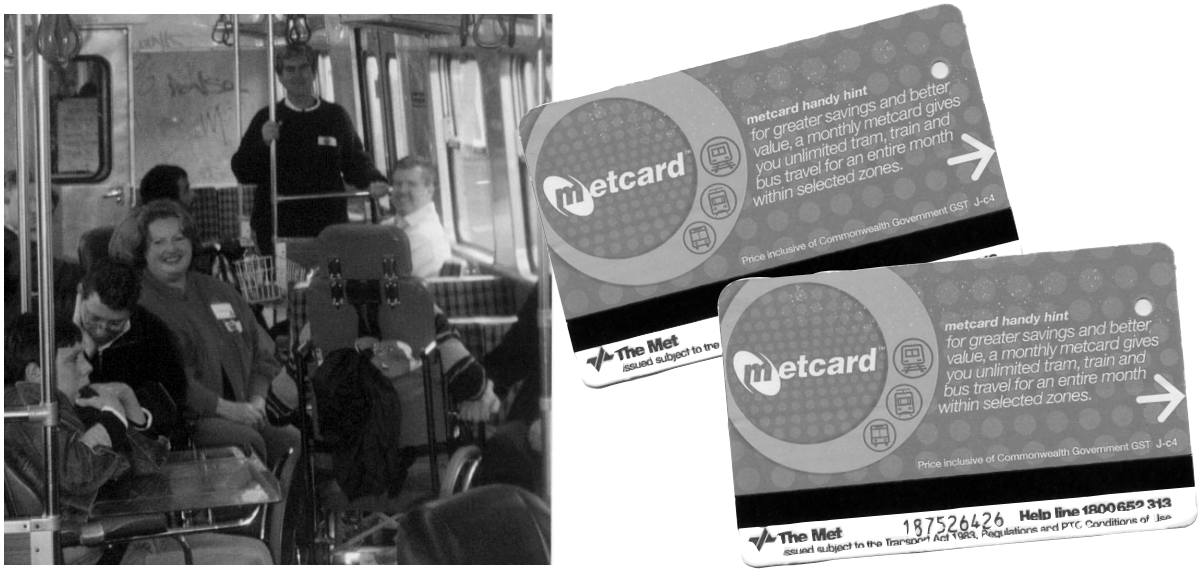
Acceleration of Action Plan targets

Around 18 per cent, or an estimated 834,700 people in Victoria have a disability.[54] These numbers are expected to increase significantly over the next three to eight years as the population ages.[55]

In surveys of people with disabilities and Senior Victorians, access to public transport consistently rates as one of the top issues that prevent people from participating in community life. This directly affects people's life opportunities as well as physical and mental wellbeing.

In addition to improving the health and wellbeing of Senior Victorians and people with disabilities, accessibility improvements to public transport generally improve services to all users.[56] Accessibility improvements also enhance Melbourne's attraction as an international destination. In 2006, Melbourne will be hosting tens of thousands of athletes and visitors of all abilities at the Commonwealth Games. The international media attention of this event presents an opportunity to showcase Melbourne's public transport.

Discrimination against people with disabilities is prohibited by the federal *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA). This includes discrimination in the provision of transport because of inaccessibility. A later federal document, the *Standards for Accessible Public*



Transport 2002 (the Standards) outlines what public transport operators need to do over a 30-year timeframe to make public transport DDA compliant.

The Department of Infrastructure (DOI) has responded to these Standards with its *Action Plan for 21st Century Accessibility* (the Action Plan). The Action Plan details the progressive improvements to be made to Victorian public transport to achieve accessibility by 2032; 25 per cent of public transport is to be accessible by 2007; 55 per cent by 2012; 90 per cent by 2017 and the full 100 per cent by 2032. The Action Plan meets the minimum achievements outlined in the Standards.

However, people with disabilities need to get to work, education, services and social activities now and cannot wait a further 28 years to access public transport. This slow progress constrains the community participation and the economic, social and cultural contribution that Senior Victorians and people with disabilities can make to the community. It also increases budgets in social security, education, health, aged care, and disability services; costs that would be avoided if people had more opportunities to be involved in community life.

In addition to accelerating the timeframe for compliance, immediate improvements to public transport are needed to ensure the accessibility of existing infrastructure is maximised. Currently, many design and service features of public transport that are intended to enhance accessibility are performing poorly. People with disabilities report that:

- Bus and train drivers sometimes refuse to put out a ramp to enable people to enter the train, particularly for passengers with less visible disabilities or a pram.[57]
- In rainy weather passengers get soaked waiting for the train where the first carriage draws level as this area of stations is rarely protected by rain shelters.
- Train drivers sometimes forget to let passengers needing a ramp off at their requested station.
- Lifts in city loop train stations frequently break down, leaving people stuck.
- The LED screens on new trains indicating the upcoming station are often incorrect or turned off.
- On-board audio information is often not operating.
- Information about train cancellations and alternative arrangements are not always made in visual as well as audio form.[58]
- Bus companies do not indicate on their timetables when low-floor buses are scheduled.

These examples highlight that achieving accessibility is about more than purchasing infrastructure. Accessible transport infrastructure also needs to be in working order and to be used as was intended.

Trams are currently the least accessible form of public transport in Melbourne. In 2003, only 31 – or less than two per cent – of Melbourne's 1,900 tram stops were accessible and only seven per cent of the tram fleet were low-floor trams. While DOI has failed to achieve significant progress on access to trams, other cities, including Stockholm, Strasbourg, Frankfurt, Linz, Manchester, Sheffield, and South London, have accessible tram networks.

Over 2,000 low-floor cars have been delivered or ordered for European systems. In Britain all new systems are required by law to offer step-free access to trams, resulting in accessible rolling stock being supplied.

Many of Melbourne's accessible tram stops and accessible trams are concentrated on Route 109 through Box Hill. These accessible tram stops have been welcomed by users, but may not be cost- or space-effective options for the accessibility of other routes. All available alternatives for providing fully accessible services across the tram network should be considered as other routes may be more easily made accessible with different tram types or tram stop configurations.

In 2004, the State Government intends to apply to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) for an exemption to the Standards for access to trams.[59] If granted, this exemption would deny people's right to access trams even beyond the slow rate outlined in the Action Plan.

In 2002, people with disabilities took action to protest the lack of disability access to trams.

RECOMMENDATION 12

The Coalition for People's Transport calls on the State Government to improve the accessibility of public transport by:

a) Accelerating the *Action Plan for 21st Century Accessibility*:
   - From 25% compliance by 2007 to 33% compliance by the Commonwealth Games in 2006.
   - From 55% compliance by 2012 to 90% compliance by 2012 (10 years after Disability Standards launched).
   - From 100% compliance for all transport by 2032 to 100% compliance by 2017 (15 years after Disability Standards launched).

b) Making immediate improvements including:
   - Requiring bus operators to:
     – Indicate the schedule of low-floor buses on all timetables.
     – Fit early model low-floor buses with ramps.
     – Identify accessible buses by means of a visible symbol at the front of buses.
   - Requiring train operators to:
     – Modify the gap between carriages to ensure it is distinguishable with a cane from entrances.
     – Use contrasting colours to distinguish entrances from gaps between carriages.
     – Use the ramp on request.
     – Provide tactile ground surface indicators as required by the Accessible Public Transport Standards on all platforms.

c) Meeting its existing obligations in relation to access to trams and not applying for a Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) exemption.

Reform of accessibility reporting, monitoring and consultation

There is currently no systematic Government process for reporting to the public on progress against the accessibility achievement targets in the Action Plan. Limited information about progress is published in the DOI *Annual Report* and other DOI publications such as the website. In contrast, DOI publishes a quarterly report, *Track Record*, detailing compliance with reliability, customer satisfaction and punctuality benchmarks.[60] Improved reporting would enable the community to make more use of upgraded services and to more easily monitor progress.

The inaccessibility of supposedly 'accessible' infrastructure purchased to comply with the Standards highlights the need for a strengthened monitoring process to support the Action Plan. People with disabilities are best placed to monitor the performance and use of upgraded infrastructure to ensure it is in working order and being used as intended.

At present, consultation in relation to accessible transport primarily occurs via the Public Transport Access Committee. Despite this process, expensive infrastructure decisions have been made that are not DDA compliant. These decisions have denied many people access to public transport, have created risky and unsafe situations for users and expose the Government to unnecessary expense where infrastructure must be replaced. They also expose the Government to risk from discrimination complaints and from potential coronial investigations.

Examples of poor infrastructure decisions include:

- Installation of ticketing machines that cannot be reached by people in wheelchairs, or understood by many people with cognitive impairments.
- Purchase of trains in which the gap between carriages is indistinguishable from carriage entries to people who are blind or vision-impaired.
- Purchase of trains and trams with emergency buttons that cannot be reached by people in wheelchairs and cannot be located by people who are blind or vision-impaired.
- Repairs and maintenance of sections of tram tracks without upgrading these sections to include accessible tram stops.[61]

Effective consultation is critical to ensuring the impact of spending is maximised and to preventing costly mistakes. While a formal committee is a useful mechanism, it cannot replace broad community consultation involving a wide range of people with disabilities. It also cannot be effective if its advice is ignored.[62] Poor infrastructure decisions and the high level of dissatisfaction among disabled users of public transport highlight that DOI's consultation processes need reviewing.

RECOMMENDATION 13

The Coalition for People's Transport calls on the State Government to reform accessibility reporting, monitoring and consultation by:

- Including a disability access section in *Track Record* to provide information on progress against the Action Plan targets.
- Employing people with disabilities to undertake regular and systematic monitoring of transport services; and conducting an annual survey of transport users with disabilities that measures their satisfaction and identifies remaining barriers to access.
- Involving disability representative and advocacy organisations and people with disabilities in reviewing DOI's processes for consultation with people with disabilities.

SAFETY

>> *Using public transport to get to work is something that makes me scared every day.*

THANH ROSE, MELBOURNE SHIFT WORKER ON TRAVELLING ON THE FIRST MORNING TRAINS [63]

>> *One of the most effective means to reduce crime is simple. Increase the staff presence on trains, buses, platforms and bus stations.*

NICHOLAS COWDERY, QC, NSW DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS [64]

Melburnians have deserted after-dark public transport in droves because of fears for their safety.[65] The primary drivers of that fear are the absence of a visible staff presence and small numbers of fellow travellers.

In addition to deterring crime, vandalism and fare evasion, customer service staff improve the physical safety of tram use by eliminating the need for passengers to remain standing to purchase a ticket, ensuring seats are made available for the least mobile passengers and preventing vehicles from moving before these passengers are seated.[66]

Customer service staff add value because they:

- Improve safety.
- Provide information about which ticket to purchase, the best routes to reach destinations, and changes to services, as well as general information for tourists.
- Assist people with prams or luggage, or accompanied by small children.
- Assist passengers with disabilities.
- Encourage a friendly and conversational environment, and discourage antisocial behaviour.
- Help to keep stations clean and safe and with operable and open toilets.
- Sell tickets.

The Public Transport Users Association (PTUA) conservatively estimates that fully staffing Melbourne's public transport would cost $25 million a year – equivalent to $5 per Victorian per year.[67] If increased fare sales from growth in patronage and the decreased costs of vandalism are taken into account in this costing, the net cost would be less than $25 million.

In February 2004 the Government announced that an additional 50 customer service staff would be present on trams and 100 extra staff on trains, including staff on more after dark services. This commitment should improve public transport safety. However, many train stations, trains and trams will continue to operate without customer service staff. Many of the new staff will also rove across services. As the presence of roving staff is not guaranteed, this system will not allay the fears of potential users who avoid transport services due to safety concerns.

Technological quick fixes, such as closed-circuit televisions, provide no protection from harassment or violence, although they may in some cases assist in the identification of offenders. Only the routine presence of appropriately trained staff can effectively assure people of their safety.

RECOMMENDATION 14

The Coalition for People's Transport calls on the State Government to introduce customer service staff on key tram routes, on all after-dark trains and at all train stations during operating hours to make purchasing tickets simpler, reduce fare evasion, and improve the safety, accessibility and usage of public transport.

TeleBus was developed to provide an effective bus service to new estates, where the road network made it difficult for normal bus routes to access the new areas. Telebuses are smaller than ordinary MET buses and provide a demand response as well as fixed route service.

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Transport options have developed across Victoria to provide transport services to people experiencing transport disadvantage. These options – generally referred to as community transport – are extremely varied.

A variety of vehicles are owned and operated by individual Councils, local community groups, health services, and social service providers. Some areas have been successful at maximising the use of available vehicles through sharing schemes. This is made difficult, however, by guidelines applied by funding bodies. In a worst-case example in Gippsland, three people travel at the same time each day in three different taxis and cannot car pool because different government departments fund each trip. Yet the total weekly cost of over $2,000 could resource a community bus for use by the whole community.

Costs including insurance against risk of accidents, maintenance and depreciation costs, and administration costs associated with vehicle bookings, discourage vehicle sharing.

Lack of coordination has been exacerbated because no single government department has responsibility for community transport. Recent efforts at inter-departmental cooperation to address these issues include the Transport Connections pilot projects funded jointly by the Department of Human Services, the Department of Infrastructure, and the Department of Education and Training; the Multi-Agency Policy Team project to address access and mobility in rural and regional areas; and the Latrobe Valley Access and Mobility Study. Each of these projects has identified barriers to delivering effective transport solutions to transport disadvantaged groups and regions. Both the Transport Connections and the Latrobe Valley Study have achieved some coordination of resources. However, the key issues preventing resource sharing have not been addressed.

Many of these issues could be resolved if additional resources were committed to cover the insurance, maintenance and purchase costs of vehicles.

Community transport needs to be developed with clear objectives as a complementary service to public and private transport. A report prepared for VicHealth called *Transport Link or Missing Link: An overview of Community Transport and its potential for increasing Community Participation and Food Access*[68], has identified the following limitations with existing community transport services:

- Lack of integration with public transport.

- Restricted access to specific transport disadvantaged groups, such as Seniors and people with disabilities.
- Hours of operation limited to weekdays and daylight hours.
- Transport being used primarily to get people to medical appointments and not made available for social and recreational purposes.
- Lack of information about services.[69]

Community transport has an important role to play delivering universal access to transport services in Victoria. Community transport should:

- Be affordable.
- Maintain the independence and participation in community life of residents who experience difficulty using other available transport resources.
- Supplement public transport by filling in the gaps public transport cannot fill. This includes:
  - Transporting people to suitable public transport services who would not otherwise be able to reach them.
  - Providing a service in areas with population densities too low to support fixed route services.
  - Providing a demand-responsive service after fixed-route services have ceased in evenings or on weekends.

Community transport needs to be planned locally if it is to deliver effective services that respond to local needs, but it must also be integrated with public transport and be subject to minimum standards. People in different parts of Victoria should receive similar levels of service, at least where there are similar population densities. Community transport should actively support the State Government's community strengthening agenda by ensuring transport options are available in the key recreation times of evenings and weekends. To achieve these strategic aims, a single government department should take responsibility for planning and resourcing community transport.

The Government's efforts at increased coordination of community transport to date have focused on getting more out of existing resources – many of which are provided by local councils or community groups in the absence of State funding. This strategy can only go so far with the very limited resources available. Additional resources are critical if an effective statewide community transport service is to be delivered without compromising the service received by existing users.

In the long run the community-wide benefits of improving access to education, employment, social and recreational activities, health care and shops will exceed the additional costs. The community benefits of stronger communities include decreased incidence of isolation and depression, reduced drug use and crime, and improved health. These benefits all represent savings to the State Budget.

RECOMMENDATION 15

The Coalition for People's Transport calls on the State Government to enhance the role of community transport by:

- Providing additional resources, and where necessary legislative reform, to address the issues preventing efficient use of community transport vehicles.
- Creating a community transport unit to plan and resource community transport.
- Funding community transport to an adequate level to provide services to transport disadvantaged communities statewide.

Photo courtesy of Stefan Lademann

V

CHAPTER 5

Actions to increase efficiency and usage of public transport

SWIFT AND RELIABLE TRAVEL TIMES

Reliable travel times that are comparable to car travel times are essential if public transport is to compete effectively with car travel. To achieve swift and reliable travel times the following issues must be addressed.

Frequency

Waiting times cause frustration for Melbourne travellers on all but a very few premium services. In many middle and outer suburban areas, and on some inner city routes, many services are spaced by 30–60 minutes, and some by as long as two hours. These waiting times deter passengers with access to cars from using public transport.

In other cities similar to Melbourne, public transport services operate at far greater frequency and have stronger usage per vehicle than Melbourne. In Toronto, Canada for example, buses typically run every 10 minutes throughout the suburbs and the subway operates at a six-minute frequency until 1 am.[70] Melbourne trials of increasing service frequencies on the Springvale Road Smart Bus route and Sandringham train line have achieved 30 per cent patronage growth.

Frequencies under 10 minutes enable passengers to simply turn up to the stop or station when they are ready to travel. As it has been achieved and delivered in other comparable world-class cities, this level of frequency should be the goal for public transport services across Melbourne.

XVI

RECOMMENDATION 16

The Coalition for People's Transport calls on the State Government to progressively increase the service frequency of all public transport services to 10 minutes in order to make public transport a competitive service relative to private car use.

Some services in busy transport corridors successfully operate at greater than 10 minute frequency, with the most densely used routes maintaining full vehicles every couple of minutes in peak hour. For these services, frequency should be set at a level that maximises usage and minimises vehicle crowding.

Connectivity

The lack of connectivity between different transport services greatly undermines the effectiveness of Melbourne's public transport. Public transport users frequently need to walk long distances from tram to train, or from train to bus and face long delays when changing between services. For the State Government to achieve its goal of increasing public transport's share of motorised trips to 20 per cent by 2020 connectivity will need to be improved by 400 per cent.

Time pulse transfer

One proven method of transport integration is the time pulse transfer used in Zurich, Switzerland. This method uses activity centres such as those outlined in *Melbourne 2030* as transport interchanges. Services are timed to all arrive together at the interchange – people change between services and continue on. To work as a system, activity centres need to be evenly spaced according to travel time.

Time pulse enables services to operate less often than a 10 or 15-minute frequency while maximising connectivity between intersecting services. It is cheaper to operate because it requires fewer vehicles and drivers. However, compared to a 10 or 15-minute frequency service, transport users need to be aware of the timetable to avoid long waiting times.

In a time pulse system, services on densely travelled routes can be maintained at high frequencies without compromising the pulse.

Adapting time pulse to Melbourne

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), Melburnians make the majority of their trips in large 'wedges', radiating out from the centre of the city – often along the spines of existing train lines. ABS's publication *Travel to Work, School and Shops* reports that:

- 64 per cent of people live and work in the same region.
- 25 per cent of all people who live in the outer regions travel to the inner for work.
- Only 14 per cent of travel is between regions.[71]

These patterns of travel suggest that effective planning for connectivity would focus on improving connections within wedges. In this system local buses and trams would cater for the majority of short trips to local destinations such as shops and schools. These should be scheduled to all arrive at key activity centres at the same time enabling easy transfers to reach other local destinations.

Longer-haul trips would be catered for by Smart Bus for non-radial services, and trams and trains for radial services. Local public transport services should be scheduled to connect with longer-haul services. An example of this adapted time pulse system has been developed for the Hume Corridor linking trains and buses.[72]

Improving physical integration

Transport users often have to cross a large train station car park to find a bus stop or walk a long distance to the nearest tram. There are often no signs to guide users to connecting services.

RECOMMENDATION 17

The Coalition for People's Transport calls on the State Government to aim to achieve a fourfold improvement in connectivity by:

- Designing public transport timetables to maximise connectivity using the time pulse model illustrated in the Hume Corridor study.
- Designing transport interchanges to maximise the ease and safety of transferring between transport modes (services), such as trains, buses and trams. Transport interchanges should prioritise pedestrian and bicycle safety and accessibility.
- Extending tram routes to maximise interchanges between services.

Priority road access

Increasing congestion on Melbourne roads has slowed road-based public transport. In some cases such as Chapel Street, South Yarra, trams often travel slower than walking pace. Often cars (with one or two occupants) block trams with over 100 passengers. For public transport to be an attractive alternative to cars, travel times must be competitive. Priority road access is strategy that directly improves public transport travel times relative to cars.

Priority road access involves combinations of vehicle separation – where cars and public transport vehicles are physically separated on the road; and traffic light priority – where lights are set to switch to green when public transport vehicles are ready to go.

In February 2004, the State Government announced a $30 million priority road access project, called 'Tram To It' to improve tram speeds. This is a welcome initiative. However, increasing tram speed options such as the creation of clearways along busy shopping streets risk local amenity and safety.

To add value to local community areas such as shopping strips, priority road access for trams should aim to also enhance the walkability of local shopping and the safety of access to trams and cycling. Options that are preferable to the creation of permanent clearways include:

- Giving trams traffic signal priority so they can pass through intersections as soon as all passengers have boarded or dismounted.
- Removing private vehicles from local shopping streets creating wide boulevards or malls with tram lines and cycle lanes in the centre.
- Widening footpaths and moving tram tracks to the kerb, limiting cars to a single lane in either direction, with turning lanes if space permits.

Local consultation is key to determining preferred options. However where options represent significant change from the status quo and there is significant community uncertainty, it could be advantageous to use pilots, such as car-free days, to demonstrate an option's potential.

RECOMMENDATION 18

The Coalition for People's Transport calls on the State Government to implement priority road access initiatives for on road public transport vehicles that also enhance the walkability of local shopping and the safety of access to trams and cycling.

Photo courtesy of Stefan Lademann

COMFORT AND CLEANLINESS

To attract passengers, public transport needs to be clean and comfortable. Transport users need protection from Melbourne's changeable weather, during both hot and rainy spells. Making more use of public transport spaces for cultural purposes would also enhance public transport.

RECOMMENDATION 19

The Coalition for People's Transport calls on the State Government to improve passenger comfort by:

- Requiring tougher maintenance standards of public transport contractors, including replacement of torn seats and swift removal of graffiti.
- Upgrading broken or dilapidated station equipment, tram stops and bus stops.
- Constructing bus shelters, tram stops, stations and transport interchanges that enable people to wait protected from the elements.
- Expanding the usage of public transport vehicles, stops and stations for cultural purposes.

ACCURATE AND EASY INFORMATION

>> *I had no idea which ticket to buy and I couldn't work out where the tram was going – I ended up in the wrong street and missed the film.*

KATE FISHER, SYDNEY RESIDENT ON MELBOURNE TRAMS

Melbourne's transport system is notoriously confusing. Signs to assist users locate bus stops and the correct platform for trains is often obscure. Many tram and bus stops have no timetable or clear information about which services are available at that location. The current bus contracts only require every third bus stop to include timetable information.

Transport information website VicTrip provides much useful information about public transport. However, the information formats used are not inaccessible to people who are blind or vision-impaired.

While friendly and informed public transport staff are the best source of information, particularly for new and infrequent users, signage, timetables, and audio announcements all need improving. Signage should be accurate, designed for first-time users, and large enough to be read from connecting service disembarking areas. The Bus Signage Improvement Project of Moreland, Darebin and Mooney Valley Councils, Dysons Bus Company and the Department of Infrastructure on bus route 508 provides an excellent model for user-friendly signage. These signs are illustrated below.

Information must be available in alternate formats for people who are print handicapped.

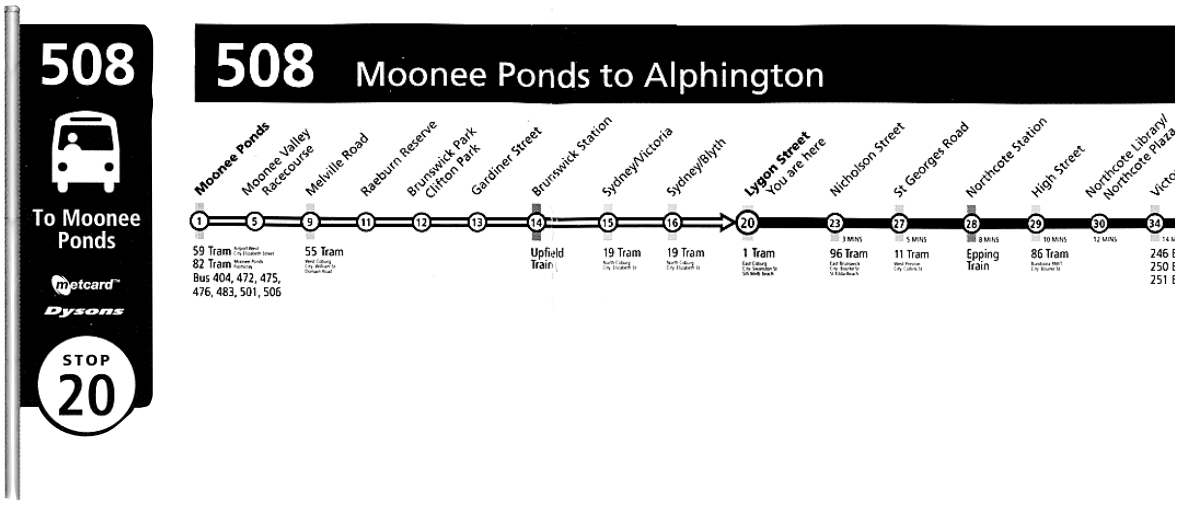
In June 2003, public transport operators formed Metlink and set in place a strategy to recreate a single look for information and signage across all public transport services. However, progress has been slow.

Public transport users must to be able to provide feedback about any difficulties with services or infrastructure. Often several transport providers use the same transport interchange and customers do not know who is responsible for the infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATION 20

The Coalition for People's Transport calls on the State Government to improve information and signage by:

- Putting accurate, consistent and user-friendly signage on all modes of public transport using the successful prototype developed for the Route 508 Bus Signage Improvement Project.
- Placing visual, tactile and braille signs at all tram, train and bus stops and transport interchanges advising customers who they can direct feedback to.
- Upgrading the VicTrip website to provide transport information in suitable formats for people who are blind or vision-impaired, and to provide information about which routes have accessible vehicles and when these are timetabled.
- Distributing printed transport information in suitable formats for people who are blind or vision-impaired in the same locations as other information is distributed.
- Providing clear and consistent audio announcements at frequent intervals and key stops on all transport services and visual signs to complement audio announcements of variations in service.



VI

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

This vision for transport aims to achieve a transport system for Greater Melbourne in which everyone can get around easily. The affordability, accessibility, availability and effectiveness of Melbourne's public transport all need improving and recommendations of how to achieve a better system are included here. However, this vision is about more than transport.

We also aim to create communities in which people are active and connected with each other. When people walk or use wheelchairs locally they have more contact with neighbours, are active physically and they support local shops. People's perceptions of their personal safety are increased the more people are around. To achieve communities that encourage activity and connection the Coalition has emphasised the need for urban planning that prioritises pedestrians over cars.

This vision also calls for a city that is socially equitable. Currently the households that can least afford to, own two or more cars because public transport services are so limited in outer suburbs. The Coalition calls for a substantial investment program to extend public transport into these areas.

To achieve a transport system that is sustainable, responsive to community needs and guarantees our State's future livability the State Government needs to act now. This paper presents a vision to achieve that goal.

ENDNOTES

1 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2001). Melbourne Basic Community Profile, *Census of Population and Housing*.

2 Coombes, P. in Mees, P. (2003). 'Paterson's Curse: The Attempt to Revive Metropolitan Planning in Melbourne', *Urban Policy and Research*, Vol. 21, No. 3, p. 295.

3 'Melbourne has been declared the near-perfect town after being rated the best city in the world to call home.' *Age*, 4 October 2002, 'Best city in the world'.

4 Department of Infrastructure (2002). *Melbourne 2030: Planning for Sustainable Growth*, Fig. 35. Enabling efficient freight movement. p. 84.

5 skyscrapercity.com.

6 Melbourne Metropolitan Strategy (2001). Technical Report No. 1 in Public Transport Users Association (2002). *it's time to MOVE*, p.6.

7 ARRB Transport Research, Report No. 299, Fig. 10 in Public Transport Users Association (2002). *it's time to MOVE*, p.6.

8 Batchelor, P. (2002). Message from the Minister 20/3/2002, VicRoads website.

9 Moodie, R. (September 2003). Presentation at Planning Institute Conference.

10 Watson, R. (July 2003). 'Planning to curb obesity and overweight', *Planning News*.

11 Mees, P. (2000). *A Very Public Solution: Transport in the Dispersed City*, p. 22.

12 RACV website, 2003 Vehicle Operating Costs. Figure cited is the average of the four medium-sized vehicles, including vehicle financing, servicing, registration, insurance and fuel costs.

13 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2000). *Household Expenditure Survey 6535.0*, 1998–99.

14 Feldman, S. (2001). 'Hold that bus: Older women, public transport and health', Presentation to Ministerial Advisory Committee on Women's Health and Wellbeing; State Government of Victoria, 2002, *State Disability Plan*, p. 9.

15 VicRoads website, Crashstats Inquiry for 2002.

16 *ibid.*

17 Newman, P. and Kenworthy, J. (1999). *Sustainability and Cities*.

18 State of Victoria (4 May 2004). *Media Release 2a and 2b, State Budget 2004*.

19 Laird (1999). *Potential for Liquid Fuel Savings in Australia* in Metropolitan Transport Forum (2002). *creating Choices: the transport web*, p. 11.

20 Bureau of Transport and Regional Economics, quoted in Macdonald, J. (26 August 2002). Traffic Congestion, RACV website, June 2003.

21 Metropolitan Transport Forum (2002). *creating Choices: the transport web*, p. 9.

22 www.epa.vic.gov.au/Air/Issues/aq9122.asp.

23 Deaths in Melbourne due to small particles – 460 per year (CSIRO 1998 estimate); Deaths due to road crashes in Melbourne in 2003 – 143 (VicRoads data).

24 *Guardian Weekly*, 11 June 2003, p. 24.

25 The poorest areas of Melbourne, such as Sunshine and Greater Dandenong, have the highest rates of car ownership in Melbourne because they have the worst access to public transport. Seven out of eight people in Greater Dandenong's population of 100,000 own a car. Conversely, Melbourne's richest suburbs of South Yarra and Toorak, which are well serviced by public transport, have comparatively low rates of car ownership. Cook, Dorothy (2002). 'The truth about cars' *Age*, 3 June 2002, Money Manager. p. 8.

26 Department of Infrastructure (2002), *op. cit.*, p. 23.

27 *ibid.* p. 63. Policy 2.2.

28 Infrastructure Planning Council (2002). *Final Report*. The New South Wales Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources and Western Australian Department of Planning and Infrastructure are examples of this kind of department.

29 www.atcouncil.gov.au/pubs/National%20Charter%20ATC%20MAY%2003.pdf.

30 Delahunty, M. (September 2003). Presentation at Planning Institute Conference.

31 As reflected in documents such as *Public Transport in Melbourne's North – A Joint Statement of Priorities by the Cities of Darebin, Hume, Moreland and Whittlesea*.

32 A number of discrimination complaints have been made to the Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission in relation to the failure of bus companies to specify when low-floor buses are timetabled. In conciliation, these companies have committed to specifying arrival of low-floor buses in their timetables.

33 Telebus is run by the Invicta bus company.

34 Department of Infrastructure (2002), *op. cit.*, Direction 5, p. 63.

35 Living Streets New Zealand, http://www.livingstreets.org.nz.

36 Tolley, R. (July 2003). Providing for Pedestrians: Principles and guidelines for improving pedestrian access to destinations and urban spaces, Department of Infrastructure.

37 Morris, J., Wang, F. and Berry, W. (2002), *Planning for Public Transport in the Future: Challenges of a Changing Metropolitan Melbourne*, RMIT University, p. 3.

38 Tolley (2003), *op. cit.*

39 Accessways are defined in the Building Code of Australia and Australian Standards for pedestrian access as 'An uninterrupted path of travel to or within a building, providing access to all required facilities.' Note: For non-ambulatory people, this accessible path does not incorporate any step, turnstile, revolving door, escalator, or other impediment, which would prevent it being safely negotiated by people with disabilities.

40 Johnstone, G. (2 April 2004). *Wheelchair Pedestrian Railway Crossing Inquests*, State Coroner Victoria.

41 Centre for Universal Design, Carolina State University, USA, website 2003. The Principles of Universal Design are:
   1. Equitable use: the design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
   2. Flexible use: a wide range of individual preferences and abilities should be accommodated.
   3. Simple and intuitive use: the use does not need special experience, knowledge, language skills or close concentration.
   4. Perceptible information: necessary information is available to the user regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
   5. Tolerance for error: hazards and adverse consequences of accidental or unintentional actions are minimised.
   6. Low physical effort: the design promotes efficiency and comfort and minimises fatigue.
   7. Size and space for approach and use: appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation and use regardless of user's body size, posture or mobility.

42 Transport Research Centre, RMIT University (1999) *Victorian Activity and Travel Survey*

43 Carlisle, Rachel (July 2003). *Transport Link or Missing Link? An overview of Community Transport and its potential for increasing Community Participation and Food Access*, VicHealth.

44 See Health Facts on the 'Together we do better' website of VicHealth: www.togetherwedobetter.vic.gov.au/healthfacts/default.asp, April 2004

45 *ibid.*

46 Colvin, K. (2002). *ACCESS TO SERVICES: Issues for women on low incomes in Lakes Entrance and surrounds*, VCOSS. Many interviewees cited lack of access to public transport as a problem with direct linkages to community problems including youth crime, high unemployment, drug problems and high incidence of mental illness and suicide.

45 Quote from Morabito, D. (2001). *Social Mapping Research Project. Snapshots of life. . . Exploring the barriers faced by people experiencing disadvantage. What can planners do?*, VCOSS

48 *ibid.* and Colvin, K. *op. cit.*

49 At the same time that fares were increased, the Short Trip Ticket was abolished and replaced with the City Saver that is only valid in the city area. Suburban short trip travellers must now purchase a two-hour ticket costing $3 full fare in Zone 1, compared to the previous $1.70 Short Trip ticket.

50 State of Victoria, October (1998). *The Passengers' Charter*.

51 Dufty, G. (2004) Research in progress based on ABS Catalogue No. 6455.0.40.001 *Consumer Price Index Standard Data Report: Capital City Index Numbers by Expenditure Class*, reports to March Quarter 2004 and ABS Catalogue No. 6401.0 *Consumer Price Index Australia*.

52 Morabito, D. and Colvin, K. *op. cit.*

53 Marsh, Eleanor and MacDonald, Helen (2002). *Roads less travelled: New pathways for 'at risk' young people in rural and regional TAFEs.* Equity Research Centre, Collingwood. Conwell, Rebecca and Atkins Carolyn (2003). *An overview of the Victorian Local Learning and Employment Networks' (LLENs) Environmental Scans*, VCOSS, Melbourne.

54 Australian Bureau of Statistics (1999). *Disability, Ageing and Carers, Summary Tables, Victoria 1998*, Catalogue No. 4430.2.40.001, p.2.

55 The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) expects the number of people with severe or profound disability to rise by 11.6% between 2000 and 2006; see AIHW (2000). *Disability and Ageing, Australian Population Patterns and Implications*, Canberra. The Department of Human Services estimates the number of Victorians aged 0 to 64 with profound or severe disability will increase by 18.6% between 1996 and 2012, see State of Victoria (2002). *Victorian State Disability Plan Implementation Plan 2002–2005*, DHS, Melbourne, p. 88.

56 Low-floor trams present a safer and easier tram entry and exit for all users, particularly passengers with prams, accompanied by small children or with shopping or other luggage. Likewise, improved signage and announcements assist all users.

57 Travellers Aid report of common complaints from train users at VCOSS meeting on public transport, October 2003.

58 Advice from hearing-impaired train user to Safe Transport Action Group, October 2003.

59 Ronaldson, H., at Disability Consultation on Franchise Contracts, 28 October 2003.

60 Department of Infrastructure, *Track Record: Victoria's Train, Tram and Bus Services*, Quarterly Performance Bulletin.

61 In many cases the construction of accessible tram stops necessitates tramlines being pulled up and relaid. Taxpayers will pay twice if expensive repair work is pulled up, and costs minimised if making lines accessible is built into the repairs and maintenance schedule.

62 Prior to the implementation of the automated ticketing machine the Public Transport Access Committee identified multiple access barriers in the proposed system and recommended against it but it was implemented anyway.

63 Thanh Rose, quoted in *Sunday Age* (24 February 2003). p. 6.

64 Cowdery, N., (2 October 2002) 'Law and Order – Missing Stories in the Tough on Crime Debate', forum presentation.

65 *Sunday Age*, 16 February 2003.

66 Injuries to passengers on board trams are frequent (averaging around 5 falls per week across the network).

67 Public Transport Users Association, *op. cit.,* p. 29.

68 Carlisle, R., *op. cit.*

69 The most recent Directory of Community Transport was published by the Department of Infrastructure (DOI) in 1999.

70 Public Transport Users Association. *op. cit.* p. 17.

71 Australian Bureau of Statistics (1994). *Travel to Work, School and Shops* in Environment Victoria. (1995) *Transport and the environment policy and research paper No.5. CONNECTIONS, frequency and speed: managing our public transport so more people will use it.*

72 Russell, E W., Bergmaier R., and Kilsby D. (2001). Melbourne's Northern Gateway an Integrated Approach: An Alternative to the Merri Creek (F2) Freeway, based on Highway, Public Transport and Rail Freight Improvements.