

Melbourne in front seat as trams win support

By GERRY CARMAN

Melbourne's trams are about to come under the international spotlight as world-wide interest in trams grows following the rapid increase in oil prices.

For the first time since it was formed in 1886, the International Union of Public Transport will meet in Australia next month when its management committee gathers in Melbourne. The meetings come at a time of growing concern among urban transport authorities about the price and long-term availability of oil fuels.

The interest in trams has grown steadily since the 1973 oil crisis, and the absence of hydrocarbon emissions makes them a favorite with environmentalists.

The union, based in Brussels, controls the International Light Rail (tram) Commission which was established two years ago. It sets guidelines, compiles research and informs members of new developments. In its first report, delivered last year in Helsinki, Finland, the commission

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identified a growing world-wide interest in trams.

In the United States, where the car has been king since Mr Ford built his T-model, there has been a remarkable swing towards light rail systems. Transport officials in Detroit, the home of the US motor giants, have had talks with officials from Boston, Pittsburgh, Portland, Buffalo, Newark and Denver on a standard system.

While new systems are being built in San Diego and Buffalo, Cleveland has ordered Italian articulated trams and Kawasaki, in Japan, will supply Philadelphia with 141 tram chassis.

In France, trams are likely to

be revived in about a dozen cities during this decade while the Belgians have won contracts in Rio de Janeiro and Manila. The Swiss and the Dutch are expanding their tramways while the Japanese have decided on a massive programme to replace existing rail services in many cities with trams.

And so on, through Italy, Austria, Sweden and Finland. In Yugoslavia, the Belgrade network will be greatly expanded and Czechoslovakia, the established supplier to eastern Europe, is about to boost its output.

But while the future of trams is assured in electricity rich Melbourne, other Australian cities are still reluctant to introduce them.

● Adelaide has scrubbed plans to extend the 51-year-old Glenelg beach line. The South Australian Government opted for a guided-bus system developed by Mercedes-Benz for its diesel vehicles.

● Brisbane decided to develop its urban railway system.

● Sydney is believed to be considering trams for its western suburbs, but tram studies in the past for the central city area and the eastern suburbs have amounted to nothing.

The Penny Royal Mills in Launceston are a million-dollar attraction to thousands of tourists each year.

The huge complex comprising a watermill, windmill, cornmill, farmhouse and, more recently, gunpowder mills have been rebuilt brick by brick under the direction of English entrepreneur Mr. Roger Smith.

All the buildings have been constructed in the style of the early 19th century.

The cornmill, windmill and gunpowder mills are in full working order and are open for inspection from 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. daily.

As well as the mills, the Penny Royal complex has a display of cannon, a restaurant, gift shops, a scale model steam railway system with 700 metres of track and a restored tram which runs between the windmill and gunpowder mill.

Mr. Smith said the centre already covered about seven acres in the heart of Launceston and he planned to extend it to include a cable car system and a ferry on the river below.

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\$1.2m. upgrading for city-Glenelg tramway

By Transport Writer STUART INNES
The city-Glenelg tramline will be upgraded in the next three years at a cost of \$1.2m.

The track, which is "in the ground," will be lifted and placed on a ballast of stones like railway tracks.

The State Transport Authority general manager, Mr. F. R. Harris, said yesterday the entire length of the lines would be welded to eliminate joints. Joints had presented wear problems.

Sleepers would be renewed where necessary and the aim of the new track laying would be to improve drainage.

Mud and water around the lines sometimes caused short circuits which operated boom gates and held up traffic on major roads.

Track improvements would cost \$750,000 and upgrading the overhead wires would cost \$450,000.

Poles would be renewed or repaired, some wiring replaced, non-fouling fittings would be installed and lighter, nylon hanging wires fitted.

Upgrading of the line, which was opened in 1929, was to ensure continued safe operation and reduce maintenance.

Services would not be disrupted by the work.

Islington ceremony to start standardisation

A tracklaying ceremony will be held this Monday, October 6 at the site of the new ANR Islington Freight Centre.

Minister John McLeay will represent Transport Minister Ralph Hunt at the ceremony.

The ceremony will mark the start of standardising the Adelaide-Crystal Brook broad gauge railway line.

The \$68 million standardisation work is a major development project for SA to be carried out by the Australian National Railways.

A streetcar named Diego

From JOHN LUCAS in San Diego

kilometres on renovated track from the San Diego and Arizona Eastern Railway.

About 30,000 passengers are expected to be carried daily on this route by 1993. Negotiations are taking place with the Mexicans to extend the line across the border to Tijuana, and more routes are planned.

San Diego's Mayor Wilson de-

San Francisco's Bay Area Transit system.

Apart from a \$500,000 Federal grant, all the money for the tramway — or "the Tijuana Trolley" as it is known locally — has come from Californian State funds: 87.5 per cent from the State petrol tax set aside for rail development, and the rest from a 0.25 per cent State sales tax authorised under

through the city streets at an average 14.5 kmh. Outside city limits they will travel at speeds up to 80 kmh.

As the trams approach, traffic lights will change automatically to ensure unimpeded passage. Two freight trams will run daily, allowing goods to be delivered into the heart of San Diego. Bus routes will be reorganised to both avoid duplication and feed the line, and 2150 new parking spaces will be distributed along the route.

Tony Larwin, the Transit Development Board's general manager, says the city's trams will save energy, reduce air pollution levels and help take freight off the freeways, thereby relieving traffic congestion and reducing highway maintenance costs.

Larwin also believes that the trams will prove more cost-effective.

In July, trams will run again through the southern California city of San Diego after an interval of 31 years.

In a country where most of the towns and cities have long ago scrapped their trolley cars or street cars and torn up their tracks, San Diego has been tearing up streets to lay new ones.

Many North American cities will be watching San Diego's new tram transport with interest and some, including Pittsburgh and Portland, Oregon, are planning similar schemes. Calgary, in Canada, already has trams

San Diego's taxi drivers may curse the street diversions caused by construction work, but when the first two-car tram was ceremoniously unveiled recently, hundreds turned up to welcome it and eat wedges of tram-shaped

By STEPHEN GIBBES

The number of passengers using public transport rocketed by 27 million in a year, according to official figures obtained exclusively by the Mirror.

The big winners were suburban trains, up 14.5 per cent in the number of passenger journeys, and ferries, up 15 per cent.

Buses stayed static despite competition and service cancellations caused by the Eastern Suburbs railway.

The Transport Minister, Mr Cox, is ecstatic at the latest figures, which are for the year ending June 30, 1980.

Preliminary figures for the six months since then show a continuing growth of 3.2 per cent in the number of rail passenger journeys.

Mr Cox said today public transport was proving more popular despite two fare rises in the past four years and industrial disputes.

He attributed the increased popularity to a number of factors.

These included the introduction of modern double-decker train carriages, the purchase of hundreds of Mercedes buses and the ordering of new ferries.

"On-time running is our big target area for improvement," Mr Cox said.

Passengers

"The opening of the Eastern Suburbs railway and the absence of strikes in the final three months of 1979 also helped boost the number of rail passengers."

Transport experts are at a loss to explain the 15 per cent jump in the number of ferry and hydrofoil travellers.

But they are confident of attracting still more passengers when two new super ferries come into service, one in October and one in the middle of next year.

HOW WE TRAVELLED

Mode of Transport	Passenger journeys in millions	
	1979-80	1978-79
Suburban rail	204.9	179
Country rail	3.2	3.0
Interstate	0.590	0.624
Sydney buses	176	176.4
Newcastle buses	18.3	17.9
Ferries—inner harbor	6.3	5.6
—Manly ferries and hydrofoils	6.3	5.3

Hornsby station for redevelopment

Tenders have been called for the redevelopment of Hornsby railway station and the air-space above it, and will close on May 6.

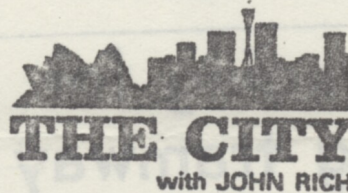
The project will be the State Rail Authority's biggest since the successful developments at Chatswood, North Sydney, Hurstville and Kogarah stations.

The Minister for Transport, Mr Cox announced in October that tenders would be called for development of land adjacent and air rights over the station.

The documents provided to tenderers make it clear that the area around the station provided for possible redevelopment is far bigger than any of the station redevelopments so far.

It covers the area of railway land from the Pacific Highway at the southern end to Bridge Road in the north and is bounded on the side by George and Jersey Streets.

Although the authority could not say what the exact area was yes-



terday it covers between two and three hectares.

However, the tender proposals make it clear that any multi-storey development of the site would be expected to be sited over the station platforms, which are in the middle of Hornsby's retail area.

The documents specify that tenderers must provide, at their cost, for a new booking office, station manager's offices, staff facilities, escalators from street level to platforms, lifts for goods and incapacitated commuters, digital indicator boards and commuter access to platforms to be located as centrally as possible.

They must also provide new footbridges over platforms and

tracks, new station entrances, free all-day commuter car parking, with a proportion of paid spaces, and some provision for bus-rail interchange.

Unlike some other proposed station redevelopments Hornsby should prove attractive to developers as the station in effect splits the Hornsby retail area in two and any development would provide a connecting link.

It is understood that Hornsby Council, which does not propose at the moment to put in a suggested plan, would like to see a multi-storey commercial-retail development, with ample car parking and provision for community areas, such as a creche and senior citizens' rooms.

The Rail Authority has made it clear that it did not necessarily expect tenderers to be interested in the whole site, but if proposals covering the whole area were received from a number of developers discussions would be held with a view to marrying them to cover the whole or a large part of the site.

WODONGA City Council will support a group trying to keep the Bandiana-Cudgewa rail line as a tourist operation.

The council this week rejected a move by Cr Chamberlain to have the line closed.

Cr Chamberlain urged the council to use commonsense and support the Victorian Transport Minister, Mr Maclellan, in having the line closed.

The line was unsafe and the people of Victoria could not afford the financial burden of upgrading and maintaining it, he said.

Cr Rogers said the Tallangatta Valley Steam Preservation Society had been formed to keep the line open for tourism.

The society had bought a 92-seat rail car, switch gear and a building to be used as a ticket office.

The society was hoping to buy a "J" class locomotive

Cr Rogers said the society planned to do the upgrading and maintenance at its own expense.

The intention would be to run tourist trips on the line.

"We shouldn't cut off this group that is trying to give this area something it has not got," Cr Rogers said.

He moved an amendment that the council write to the society offering its support if needed.

Cr McLellan said she could remember travelling on the

Cudgewa line as a child and said it was a beautiful trip. "Anyone who wants this

He said such projects as Sovereign Hill at Ballarat and the Bendigo tramway had detractors before they were developed but had been great tourist boons.

The Cudgewa rail line was also part of the heritage of North-East Victoria and should be preserved, he said.

Cr Chester disagreed.

"It would be a shocking

thing for this council to encourage these people (the members of the steam preservation society) to get into more financial trouble," he said.

The Mayor, Cr Draper, said he had changed his mind about the project after hearing Cr Rogers' outline of the plans.

"I am prepared to let them have a go and support them if they need any support," he said.

The council voted 10-2 for Cr Rogers' proposal.