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CITYRAIL TIMETABLE
REVIEW

ADELAIDE BUS
CONTRACTS

THE WAY WE'VE
CHANGED



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Years Commemorative Issue 1946 - 1996

MELBOURNE'S GRAND PRIX

The combination of the inaugural Melbourne race of the Australian Formula One Grand Prix and Moomba provided the Victorian Public Transport Corporation with the challenge of its biggest ever mass movement of people. These five days, Thursday 7 March to Monday 11 March all proved a winner for public transport.

The four Grand Prix (GP) days culminated on the main race day, Sunday 10 March 1996, when 86,500 people (of a total day attendance of around 200,000) travelled by tram to the race track at Albert Park, a couple of kilometres south-east of the CBD. During the four day extravaganza, more than 225,000 people travelled by tram to the track, making a total of 450,000 extra boardings. There were more than 500 trams in service on all routes (refer photos p.124.)

Over the same period, Met Trains carried an extra 463,100 people with 166,500 extra boardings on race day – the highest Sunday tally ever. There was a 39% increase (or 14,400 trips) above normal weekend figures on V/Line passenger services. Met Bus carried 400 people to the track on the special wheelchair accessible bus, 5000 on extended bus routes and 9500 on buses that replaced trams on routes 12 and 96. Tallies taken over the four days show 2,670,000 passenger journeys on The Met and V/Line during the four days, compared to the normal patronage figures of 1,760,000.

While services were stretched to the limit, few problems occurred and (despite nitpicking daily media) the PTC earned many deserved accolades.

Preparations

Leading up to the Grand Prix (GP), the PTC's Infrastructure Division extended light rail platforms at Middle Park and Wright Street to accommodate two articulated trams, and extended two safety zones in St Kilda Road. Light rail cross-overs were installed at Middle Park, and a left-hand turn from Park Street at the end of route 12 into Fitzroy Street, St Kilda. PTC staff erected all signs, crowd control barriers in Spencer Street and parawebbing barriers in Clarendon Street.

Prior to March, new electric supply feeder cable was installed along Swanston Street from Lonsdale to Sturt Street; along Clarendon Street, Albert Road, Mills and Dank Streets; and new trolley wire was installed in Fitzroy Street. From 7-10 March, five substations were manned continuously between 5.30am and 9.00pm, those being Carlton, Kingsway, St Kilda, St Kilda Beach and Westgate Freeway, while track and electrical crews were on constant standby. Tram crews were requested to use their on-board Power Limit Switch to moderate the amount of current drawn.

Spectators and Albert Park residents were warned that vehicle tow-aways and increased fines for parking infringements would apply during the GP week. The clear message for patrons was to use the free public transport service being made available from the city rather than take cars. There were no public car parks at the race circuit, but more than 10,000 car parks were available in the city.

Planning public transport for the Grand Prix had taken 18 months and the special arrangements included:

- Express light rail from Spencer Street station to Wright Street and Middle Park, and shuttle trams along St Kilda Road from Flinders Street station every minute; these were free to GP ticket holders. All were B class artics.

- Shuttle trams along Clarendon Street from Spencer Street to South Melbourne loop in Albert Road every two minutes.
- Extra trams along Dandenong and Brighton Roads to St Kilda Junction.
- A 15 minute NightRider shuttle bus between St Kilda and the city from 12.30am to 4.30am on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights.
- A wheelchair accessible bus between Spencer Street station and the circuit at 30 minute intervals 7.30am-7.00pm on Thursday - Saturday and to 9.00pm on Sunday.

The Task in Progress

From Thursday 7 March, routes 11 (West Preston) and 86 (Bundoora) were extended south from the city to Albert Park loop on route 12 (South Melbourne and St Kilda Beach), while route 22 (Moreland - Arts Centre) was extended to Commercial Road.

On the Thursday, congestion at Flinders and Spencer Streets corner became a big problem early in the morning as no change had been made to the traffic light sequence, causing a large bank-up of trams. At about 10.30am a decision was made to halt all route 48 and 75 trams plus the City Circle from travelling in Spencer Street. These shunted in Flinders Street. Unfortunately, no staff were available to advise waiting passengers that these trams were no longer travelling along Spencer Street.

Shunting at the cross-over near the World Trade Centre was banned after congestion caused by shunting trams in the evening peak on the Thursday.

Arrangements on Friday 8 March were nearly the same as Thursday except that from about 6.30am routes 48 and 75 terminated at Flinders and Spencer Streets and the City Circle trams only used Spencer Street to take up running what some called the 'City Horseshoe' (Flinders - Spring - Victoria - La Trobe Streets). Also to reduce the number of trams in Spencer Street only every second tram on route 109 (Mont Albert - Port Melbourne) was run through, the rest running as route 42 and terminating in Collins Street.

On Friday night large numbers of trams were shifted between depots to release B2 articulateds for the shuttles.

The Busiest Weekend

On Saturday, Sunday and Monday, a Saturday timetable was in force for all tram routes. However, this proved to be insufficient on a number of routes on the Saturday and Sunday, due to substitution of Z and A class trams for the usual B class, resulting in severe overcrowding at times. Crowding also occurred on routes feeding St Kilda Road where no extras had been provided. To allow the light rail and Clarendon Street shuttles to operate hourly, route 96 (St Kilda light rail) was replaced by bus on both Saturday and Sunday (with most trips well patronised) between Spencer Street and St Kilda Beach, while Kew Depot took over the running of the East Brunswick section of that route using its own A class. Route 12 trams also were replaced by buses.

Met Bus was unable to cope with the loadings on the two tram replacement services on the Saturday and Sunday; additional vehicles were provided by the Sita group. Bus route 600 was extended to Middle Park to cater for Grand Prix patrons, this being an unadvertised change.

NightRider services were boosted on the Friday and Saturday nights and a NightRider bus service was offered for the first time on a Sunday night, running a 30 minute

FIRST GLIMPSE...

PERTH'S LOW FLOOR 'CAT' BUS

The first completed Scania/DAB-Silkeborg (Series 11-0860S-022RHD) low-floor midi Citybus for Perth's CAT System was seen outside the DAB headquarters in Silkeborg, Denmark in March. The 16 buses were to be shipped from Hamburg, Germany in three portions during the month. Commonly known as the 'Servicebus', the type first appeared in 1990 and has been sold in Norway, Sweden, the Benelux and, Denmark. The bus was awarded the Danish prize for 'Good Industrial Design' in 1994. Thanks to the untraditional design, the bus features a 100% ultra low floor. To meet with the climatic requirements of Western Australia, where temperatures in the summer are quite different from those prevailing in northern Europe, the CAT buses have been equipped with high capacity cooling for the power pack as well as a Denso airconditioning system (on the roof). Seats are to be manufactured and installed locally. The buses are painted in an all-over grey/silver metallic. - Tim Timoleon



service between 12.30am and 4.30am. A total of 6330 boardings were recorded over the three nights.

On the Saturday, the majority of tram stops in St Kilda Road had bags placed over the tram stop signs to allow trams to run express between a few stops which had been specially signposted to indicate the closest entrance gate. This idea may have worked (as staff were posted to all stops in St Kilda Road to advise passengers where to join a tram), except no-one organised the traffic lights which, as is usual for Melbourne, changed to red on the approach of a tram. This resulted in frustrated passen-

gers wanting to board a stationary tram at a stop which was 'out of use', or abusing a driver for not letting them off a stationary tram. (Moomba had a number of events close to stops that were not available for use, resulting in many angry would-be passengers.) Consequently, on the Sunday the bags were taken down and all service trams were required to stop for passengers at all stops, as were some of the special Grand Prix shuttle trams.

The St Kilda Road and light rail shuttle trams ran very well. However, the service cars on St Kilda Road were nearly always late, resulting in very few reaching the University terminus. The short-shunting of these trams caused delays to all the shuttle B2s, causing them to run less trips than planned.

Strangely, passengers were directed away from Museum station even though it would have made a convenient interchange with the Swanston Street/St Kilda Road 'shuttle' trams, supplementing the Flinders Street stop.

The express running also worked very well on Clarendon Street – in fact so well that hardly anyone attended the Clarendon Street Traders Street Party, much to the disappointment of traders. Due to the street party the replacement bus service on route 12 was unable to follow the tram line.

While the main race was on, trams were lined up ready for the end of the race on the light rail line between St Kilda station and Middle Park. A total of 22 B2 trams also were stabled in Park Street, St Kilda (route 12) for return via the new connecting curve into Fitzroy Street to St Kilda Road. Also on route 12, in Mills Street on the Down track were 13 B2s, while in Albert Road on the Down track were four B2s at the Canterbury Road end (see front cover).

On the Sunday night after the GP closing event – a John Farnham Concert – insufficient trams were available to cope with the crowd returning home, and long waits were experienced. This was apparently caused by the rostering not taking into account the late finishing time of the concert.

Moomba Parade

Monday 11 March (a public holiday) saw trams returning to their normal depots, while services were diverted and disrupted until 1.00pm as is usual for the annual Moomba Parade in the city. Again heavy loading was experienced on most routes.

Conclusion

Perhaps the ultimate compliment came from one caterer in the South Melbourne area who was heard to lament that 'the (GP) transport was too efficient because the crowds got away very smartly and there was not as much business for locally established eateries as forecast'.

All in all the PTC should be congratulated for a very good effort in handling the event, and with some of the problems now known, next year's effort should be even better ■

