

UNION METPLAN

UNION METPLAN presents the combined public transport unions and VTHC strategy for developing Melbourne's public transport system over the coming 15 years.

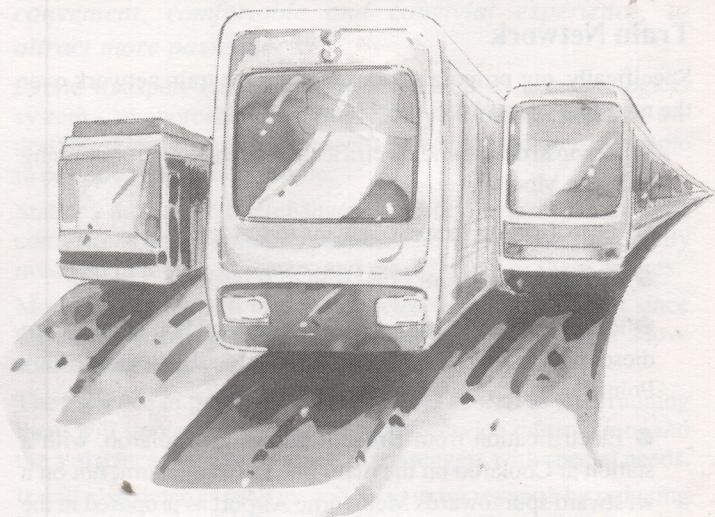
UNION METPLAN is our submission to the Victorian Government and Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) on 'MetPlan'. It includes the Union/VTHC response to the MTA's draft MetPlan released in May for public comment.

This leaflet outlines the main points in a comprehensive report, UNION METPLAN : **Melbourne's Public Transport into the Twenty First Century**, that has been presented to the Minister for Transport. (Copies are obtainable by phoning Martin Gray or Kathie Riddle on (03) 610 2343.)

UNION METPLAN is the work of a combined union working party, drawing on a series of seminars to involve a much wider group of union members.

Victorian Trades Hall Council
Australian Railways Union
Australian Tramway and Motor Omnibus Employees Association
Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Enginemen
Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union
Association of Railway Professional Officers of Australia
Australian Transport Officers' Federation
Electrical Trades Union
Municipal Officers Association
Vehicle Builders Employees' Association

MELBOURNE'S PUBLIC TRANSPORT INTO THE 21st. CENTURY



**PUBLIC TRANSPORT UNION'S/VTHC SUBMISSION
TO GOVERNMENT ON METPLAN
AUGUST 1988**

BENEFITS

The benefits of Union MetPlan include :-

- Extension of fast frequent electric train services to all the main commuter areas around Melbourne, including Geelong, Melton/Bacchus Marsh, Sunbury, Craigieburn, Mernda, Cranbourne and Baxter.
- A high-technology very fast electric mass transit/air freight service from the City to Melbourne Airport.
- Extension of tram services to Doncaster (via the Eastern Freeway), Knox City, South Morang, Gladstone Park, Avondale Heights and Elwood.
- Introduction of high-quality MetLink buses on an outer-ring route around Melbourne.
- Greatly improved passenger security, less vandalism and better service to passengers with special needs (such as people with disabilities), by integrating stations/interchanges into multi-purpose commercial community centres, and strengthening the roles of guards, station staff and tram conductors in helping passengers.
- An expanding role for efficient in-house support services in constructing new trains, trams and buses, train and tram line extensions, and new facilities at District Centres and other locations.
- A net increase in Met jobs, with improved job security, training and retraining, leading to better morale and better service to the travelling public.
- A new approach to funding public transport that ensures all who benefit from the system contribute to its operation and expansion.

OVERVIEW OF UNION STRATEGY

The prime goal of Union MetPlan is :-

- To increase public transport's share of the total passenger transport task in Greater Melbourne.

In other words, public transport usage must grow at a rate faster than that of car travel.

Our target is therefore to achieve at least a 35% increase in public transport patronage over the next 15 years, compared to the 20% targetted in the MTA's draft MetPlan. Under the MTA's target, public transport's share of the total transport task would actually fall.

August 1988
Melbourne

UNION METPLAN

EXPANDING THE NETWORK

Our goal for the public transport network is an expanded substantially - electrified system to serve Greater Melbourne into the next century.

Train Network

Specifically, our proposals for expanding the train network over the next five years (1988 - 1993) are :-

- Reconstruction and electrification of the line from Epping to South Morang.
- Electrification from St. Albans to Calder.
- Electrification from Frankston to Baxter.
- Re-opening of Mornington, with introduction of a modern diesel rail car service between Mornington, Baxter and Stony Point.
- Electrification from Broadmeadows to Coolaroo, with a station at Coolaroo on the main line to Craigieburn, not on a westward spur towards Melbourne Airport as proposed in the draft MetPlan.
- Electrification from Sunshine to Melton, without track duplication between Deer Park West Junction and Melton.
- Electrification from Werribee to South Geelong, with introduction of fast electric double-decker inter-urban trains in place of the existing V/Line diesel trains.
- Electrification from Dandenong to Cranbourne, with construction of train stabling facilities at Cranbourne.

And over the following ten years (1994 - 2003) :-

- Reconstruction and electrification of the line from South Morang to Mernda.
- Electrification from Calder to Sunbury.
- Electrification from Coolaroo to Craigieburn.
- Electrification from Upfield to Somerton.
- Electrification from Melton to Bacchus Marsh, without track duplication.
- Construction of a 'high-technology' very-fast electric mass transit link between the City and Melbourne Airport, capable of carrying some air freight as well as passengers, with the system design chosen through a national competition.
- Introduction of electrified train services between Grovedale, Drysdale and Geelong.
- Construction of an electrified heavy rail link from Huntingdale to VFL Park.

Our proposed train network by 1993 and 2003 is illustrated in Figure 1.

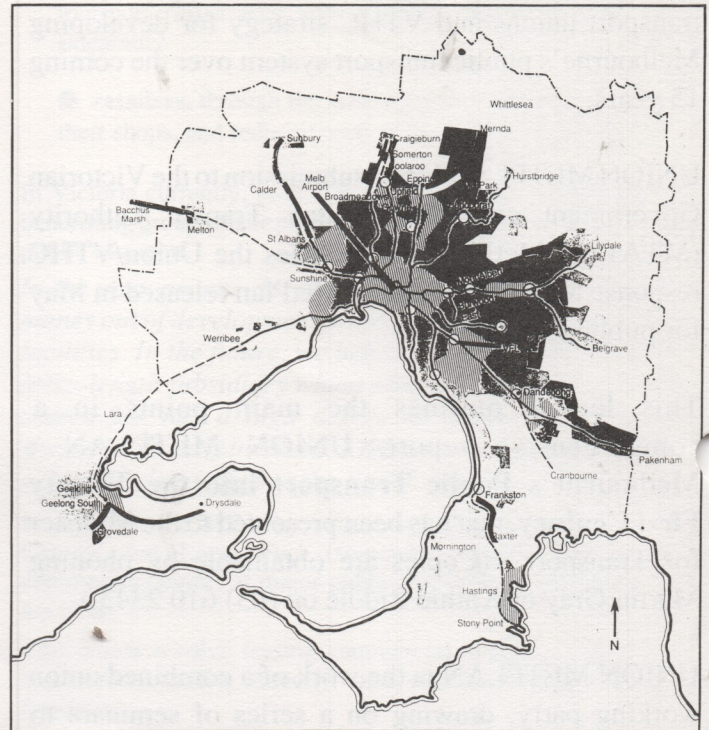


FIGURE 1. Electric Train line extensions by 2003

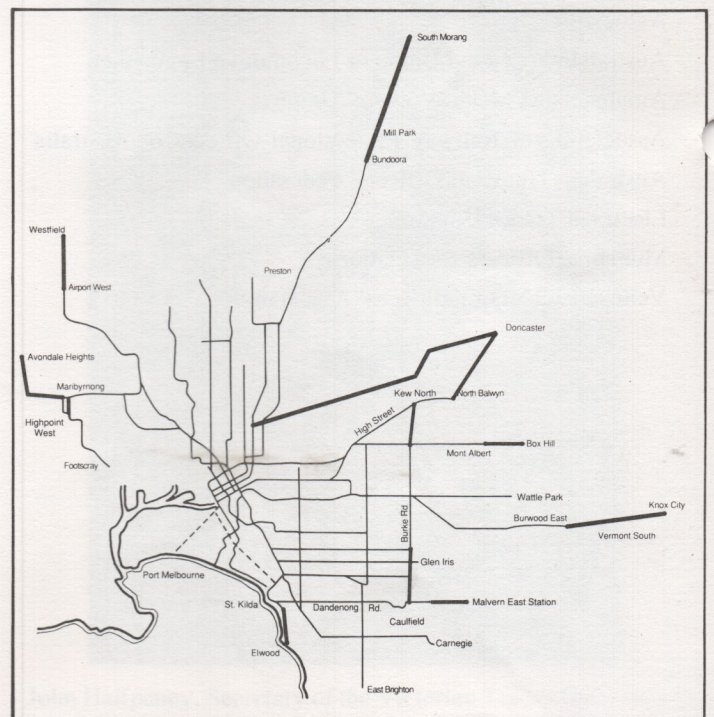


FIGURE 2. Tram Extensions by 2003

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Tram Network

Our proposals for expanding the tram network over the next five years (1988 - 1993) are :-

- St. Kilda to Elwood.
- Maribyrnong to Avondale Heights.
- Bundoora to Mill Park.
- East Burwood to Vermont South.
- Darling Road to East Malvern Station.
- Mont Albert to Box Hill.
- North Balwyn to Doncaster Shopping Town.
- Airport West to Tullamarine Shopping Town.
- Gardiner to Caulfield.

And over the following ten years (1994 - 2003) :-

- Fitzroy to Doncaster High Street (via Eastern Freeway).
- Mill Park to South Morang.
- Vermont South to Knox City.
- Camberwell to East Kew.

We also believe the following additional tram extensions should be evaluated :

- Tullamarine Shopping Centre to Gladstone Park
- Avondale Heights to Keilor
- West Preston to Reservoir, via Edwardes Lake
- Doncaster Shopping Town to Donvale
- Extensions in the Footscray area.

Our proposed tram network by 2003 (excluding routes to be assessed) is illustrated in Figure 2.

Where possible all new tram track in its own exclusive reservation should be laid on steel sleepers and ballast, rather than set in concrete. Steel sleepers and ballast reduce the initial construction cost by 44%, while yielding on-going savings in maintenance.

Bus Network

We support a major expansion of the network of Met bus services, and their hours of operation.

A number of measures to give Met buses priority on the road system - such as traffic signal priority, bus lanes and bus streets - are required urgently to reduce journey times and increase punctuality.

We welcome the draft MetPlan's proposal for MetLink buses operating on ring routes, but doubt whether the MTA has in mind a service level of sufficient quality. MetLink buses must offer a higher degree of comfort, visibility and convenience than any Met buses currently operating.

We propose a progressive takeover by the MTA of the bus services currently provided by private operators.

ATTRACTING MORE PASSENGERS

We reject the draft MetPlan's proposals for reducing station staff and eliminating tram conductors through the introduction of proof-of-payment ticketing, off-system ticket sales, and driver-only tram operation.

These cuts in operating staff would lower passenger security, lead to increased vandalism, reduce service to people with special needs such as the disabled and elderly, and reduce access to service information. Patronage would fall.

We want to make travelling by public transport a secure, convenient, comfortable and convivial experience, to attract more passengers.

Public transport cannot simply be treated as a technological system - an approach which regrettably permeates much of the draft MetPlan. It must also be seen as a system operated by people to provide a service to people.

Stations and other interchanges must be integrated into local commercial and community centres. The MTA should be directly involved in the development and management of these centres.

More passengers will then be attracted to public transport since the places where people want to go will be right next to or above stations/interchanges.

The presence of people using the centres as well as staff running them will improve passenger security, service information, and the assistance that can be given to passengers with special needs.

It will also deter vandalism and raise extra revenue by reducing fare evasion. Ticket selling and checking will be just one function of station staff whose roles would become increasingly diversified.

At District Centres, we believe the Met should be involved in providing a range of community service and commercial functions and facilities, in addition to the usual functions directly related to the public transport system such as issuing and checking tickets and providing Met service information.

We call on the MTA and Ministry of Transport to organise a pilot project of community and union involvement in station development along these lines. A station where vandalism and passenger security are particular problems should be chosen for participation in the project.

Essential for improving passenger security and reducing vandalism is complementary co-ordinated action by the Transit Police and general Met operating staff. Regular meetings between Transit Police officers and union delegates need to be held to improve mutual understanding and general liaison. Radio communication between operating staff and Transit Police should be upgraded.

The overall aim should be to reduce the average response time of the police to a call for assistance to below 10 minutes.

Tram conductors should be retained, with their role in providing service information and assistance to passengers with special needs strengthened.

Other measures needed to encourage more patrons are a timetable review, re-employment of day cleaners of trains, improved facilities for bicycles at stations, and a major marketing and education campaign.

SUPPORT SERVICES

The draft MetPlan virtually ignores the support services that are essential to expand the Met system and keep it running smoothly. Our strategy involves an expanding role for efficient in-house support services. With fleet acquisition set to increase dramatically, and Comeng having major problems in supplying new trains and trams, the Government and MTA must now seriously investigate the option of vehicle construction by STA and MTA workshops.

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Newport Workshops have the capability to assemble buses for the Met more cheaply than the private sector. We call for detailed examination of this option.

We also call for a detailed feasibility study into the involvement of V/Line and MTA workshops in train and tram construction.

We oppose the draft MetPlan's proposed net staff cuts in the vehicle maintenance area.

Our proposed program for extending the electrified train and tram networks, and Met development of District Centres, other stations and modal interchanges as integrated transport/commercial/community centres, will mean a major increase in workload for the track, overhead, signals, communications, civil construction and building maintenance divisions of the MTA. Clearly, increasing employment in these divisions is expected.

EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

Our strategy will involve a net growth in jobs in the Victorian public transport industry.

Specifically we call for :

- a secure continuing role for roving guards on Met trains with special emphasis on assisting passengers;
- increased staffing at stations and other modal interchanges
- but with diversification of the roles played by Met staff as public transport facilities are integrated into commercial/community centres;
- retention of tram conductors, with a strengthening of their role in assisting passengers;
- more jobs in support services, to construct trains, trams and buses in STA/MTA workshops; construct train and tram
- network extensions; and undertake the considerable
- construction work that will be needed at District Centres and other locations;
- more jobs in the MTA Bus Division as the area of operation of the Government bus system expands.

We propose ways to improve recruitment, training and retraining, and working conditions, and most importantly to boost staff morale and so improve service to the public.

A NEW APPROACH TO FUNDING

The MTA's draft MetPlan fails to address the problems with the current system of funding public transport. Ominously the draft signals funds for public transport may even decrease in real terms over the coming 15 years.

To get extra and more secure capital for public transport, we propose that a Public Transport Trust Fund be set up. A portion of the revenues from a number of existing taxes on groups who benefit from public transport could be dedicated to this trust fund.

Such benefitting groups include :-

- **businesses/employers**, since public transport provides access for employees and customers, and allows expenditure on car parking to be avoided;
- **road users**, since without public transport there would be unbearable traffic congestion, longer journey times, more road accidents, and greater difficulty in finding a parking place;

- **property developers and owners**, since nearby public transport raises land and property values, and increases saleability.

- **retailers**, through the access public transport provides to their shops, and reduced costs of providing car parking.

In Victoria currently, unlike in many countries overseas, these benefitting groups make no specific contribution towards funding public transport.

In the past, private developers have made a great deal of money out of development projects around public transport facilities. In the future, we believe that the MTA, or an at-arms-length subsidiary which remains solely Government-owned but has a high degree of commercial freedom, should be directly involved in this lucrative activity. Profits would be channelled to the Public Transport Trust Fund.

In addition, the MTA (or subsidiary) should manage District Centres and Local Foci (somewhat smaller commercial/community centres at major public transport modes) once they are built.

This would involve leasing commercial spaces, running some commercial outlets directly, and administering community facilities.

These commercial activities should return net revenue to the MTA, while providing more diverse job opportunities for MTA employees and maintaining that all-important staff presence on the Met system.



John Halfpenny, Secretary of the Victorian Trades Hall Council, launching Union Metplan at Caulfield Station, 28 August 1988, with members of the MTA Band in the foreground.