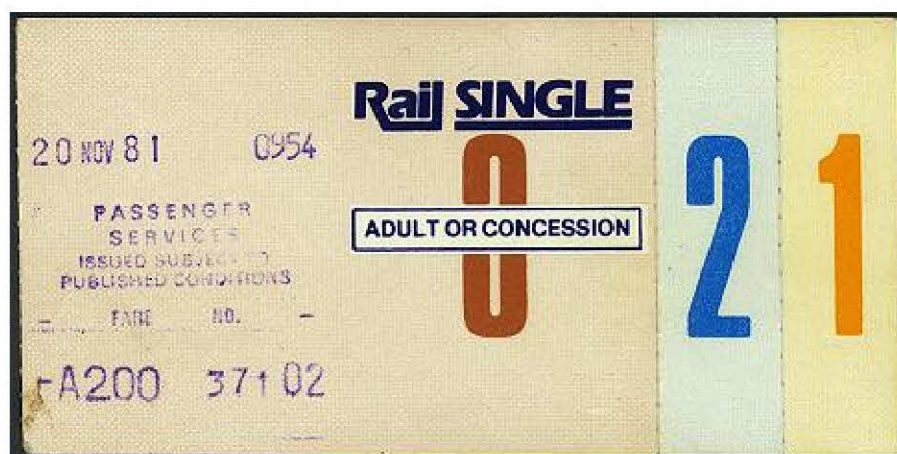


Almex Card Combined Bus/Rail Issues

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These tickets were an unusual and rarely encountered part of the zonal fare range. It was probably not until after their withdrawal that many collectors saw them or were even aware of their existence.

During 1981, four railmotor services on Melbourne's periphery were replaced by contract road buses. There was a need to alleviate, as much as possible, the re-booking at the rail terminal and offer a form of through ticket recognisable to rail staff. Large, thin cards had already been devised on which the left hand side was inserted into a bus Almex machine to print all necessary details of travel. The first variation of this type of ticket was the bus issued Metrocard Off Peak, described in the previous 1969-1981 section. With the arrival of the zonal fare system came a need to extend on this idea for more specific ticket types. This was done with some ingenuity, requiring only four tickets that were dual purpose - adult or concession. They were printed on a thin gloss card with removable stubs on the single, off peak and Rail+FOUR return issues. The single and off peak ticket had two different zone combinations - 3,2,1 and 2,1,3. The 3,2,1 combination is understandable as they were issued on buses operating in zone 3 and connecting with suburban trains at Frankston, Dandenong and Lilydale (as the railmotors had), all boundaries of zone 2. However, the reason for a 2,1,3 combination is less clear. They may have been carried on the buses as an extension for any boarding, with the passenger already holding a ticket for that proprietors service, but wishing to transfer to the train. It is known that they were not used on the railway operated buses from Sandringham but that stocks were produced possibly with this in mind. We have yet to see a used 2,1,3 combination Almex card ticket.



Original printing on coloured card



Later printing on white card



The 2,1,3 combination



Later printing off peak ticket on white card



The 2,1,3 combination on an off peak ticket

As the buses replaced rail services, they were treated somewhat as an extension of it, so a Rail+FOUR was also necessary. These were provided for bus to rail transfers, and whilst it is conceivable they could have been issued for travel between stops adjacent to the former stations, this is quite unlikely. The relevant bus routes did not, nor could they, strictly parallel the closed railway, and if the rail fare structure were completely adhered to, there would have also been an Almex card Rail Single Zone 3 - no such ticket is known. More information on the bus/rail replacement is given in the Rail+Two section.



Rail+FOUR single



Rail+FOUR return