

A SILENT, non-polluting, fuel-efficient public transport system may be more than just a dream for Melbourne.

The Tramways Board is collecting information overseas on the costs and benefits of trolley buses — buses which run on electricity from overhead wires.

Tramways Board chairman Mr Dudley Snell said that although a decision was a long way off, it was hard to argue logically against trolley buses as an efficient, clean way of moving people.

“One complaint I’ve heard is that they’re too quiet,” he said.

In some places trolley buses have been labelled “Silent Death” because they move through traffic with no more noise than a whisper of tyres.

“It would be unlikely that trolley buses, if they are accepted, would replace existing trams.

“By the time you remove tram tracks, remake the roadway, do

Back to the buses move

the overhead wire modifications and buy the trolley bus, there are still favorable economic reasons for keeping the trams.

“It is more likely that they would replace diesel buses on major arterial routes, such as the bus service from Doncaster.”

According to estimates, a trolley bus would cost \$120,000 compared with \$80,000 for a similar-sized diesel bus. But overhead wires would cost “a couple of hundred thousand dollars” a km.

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