

# Plan for super trains, buses

By GERRY CARMAN, our Transport Reporter

Melbourne seems certain to get double-decker trains and trolley buses as part of a major plan to woo more people back to public transport as oil prices rise.

VicRail and the Tramways Board are planning faster, more comfortable and extra services. The State Government is asking the Federal Government for financial help.

The State Transport Minister, Mr. Maclellan, and his top administrators see the latest oil price rises as the springboard for the re-emergence of public transport in a dominant role.

Mr. Maclellan said yesterday Canberra should spend part of its windfall oil tax in a once-only opportunity to improve Victoria's public transport network.

## IN BRIEF

### Gold Coast

#### rapist

#### hits again

**SURFERS PARADISE.** — Gold Coast police are hunting a masked gunman who has raped two women and assaulted a third in the past month.

They suspect the man, who carries a shotgun, may also be responsible for the murder of a young couple at Kingscliff last January.

The first rape attack happened on December 15 when he abducted a 30-year-old woman from her Tugun home, later dumping her in the boot of her car.

Last week he attacked a couple in their Cabarita home and fled after attempting to rape the woman. Last Friday night he struck at Cudgen, breaking into an isolated farmhouse and raping a 27-year-old woman.

#### Air rescue

**HOBART.** — Two injured Sydney bushwalkers were rescued by helicopter from Lake Curly in the far central Tasmanian highlands.

Shane O'Neil, 27, and Richard Murray, 27, waited three days with swollen knee joints while two other walkers went for help.

#### Two saved

**BRISBANE.** — Two men stranded for six days on an island after their ketch was washed ashore, watched news reports on their progress on a portable television.

The steel 10-metre ketch Galavanta ran aground on Prudhoe Island, 60 kilometres east of Mackay on December 27 after its anchor dragged in heavy seas.

Yesterday a Mackay sea rescue team went to the island where they rescued the boat's owner, Carl Henry Siebert, 55, of Warwick, and deckhand Tim Stilwell, 19 of Brisbane.

#### Flood plea

**PORT PIRIE.** — A deputation from Port Pirie will ask the South Australian Premier, Mr. Tonkin, for funds to cover repairs and rebuilding of flood-damaged streets.

The city's mayor, Mr. W. G. Jones, said yesterday the deputation would also forward flood relief assistance forms from people whose properties were not insured against flooding.

Port Pirie was hit by a torrential downpour on Monday which caused the worst flooding in 47 years and damage estimated at

"Even before the latest increases the Commonwealth was collecting \$2500 million from transport, with a total expenditure of \$513 million," Mr. Maclellan said.

He said that with the latest five cents a litre increase the Government would add about \$1000 million to the \$2000 million "clear profit" it was making before.

Mr. Maclellan noted: "At least 1980 is an election year. I believe they will get much more attentive to the needs of Victoria."

VicRail's general manager, Mr. Ian Hodges, revealed the railways would like to introduce double-decker trains, similar to those used in NSW.

They would initially run express services on the busiest lines, like Glen Waverley, Dandenong and Fawkner. Each carriage would have 40 per cent more seats than the existing trains, ensuring greater comfort — particularly during peak periods.

"I think the Railways Board will give very serious consideration to double-decker trains when the next contract for trains is let," Mr. Hodges said.

VicRail has a five-year contract for 50 silver trains which means the double-deckers could be ordered around 1985.

Mr. Hodges said that before this happened, railway tracks would have to be upgraded.

Future trains would also have better seats, lighting and air conditioning.

### Hooligans

And a safety move which could be introduced soon would involve the locking-up of some carriages on trains at night to enable guards to maintain better vigilance.

Mr. Hodges said VicRail was compelled to run at least three carriages a train at night but two carriages could be locked on quiet routes. This would ensure that women and children could travel without fear of hooligans.

The Tramways Board chairman, Mr. Dudley Snell, said trolley buses could be in service in two or three years.

Initially, the trolley buses, probably seating between 40 and 50 passengers, are expected to provide cross-town services.

This would plug a major gap in the existing public transport network by connecting train, tram and bus feeder services.

There are no trolley buses running in Australia at the moment.

Other routes envisaged for the trolley buses, which are quieter and more manoeuvrable than trams, are Springvale, Warrigal, Huntingdale and North roads.

Mr. Snell said trolley buses were ideal for routes which did not warrant the huge investment of heavy railed transport — trains and trams.

He said the board was also examining plans to extend the recently extended Burwood line even further. It was also planning to start work on an extension to Bundoora, but there were problems with funds.

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