

Express

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News from the Met

Cranbourne gets set for the Met

Residents of one of Melbourne's fastest growing regions are about to move closer to the city.

From 25 March a fully electrified service will link Cranbourne and the metropolitan area, ushering in a new era in train travel for the south-eastern growth corridor.

Up until 1992 V/Line operated a service to Cranbourne twice a day on weekdays. By contrast, the new weekday service will run half hourly during the peak, and every 40 minutes at other times.

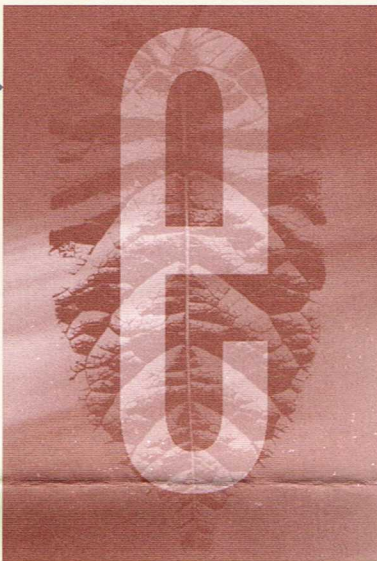
Work on the \$27 million upgrade has included a rebuild of Cranbourne Station, the construction of a new station at Merinda Park, and the electrification of the entire line to Dandenong.

The manager of the Cranbourne Rail Electrification Project, Mr Alan Dockery, said the PTC consulted closely with the local council and community groups on the new line.

He said each station would offer parking for 200 cars, closed-circuit TV surveillance, enclosed waiting areas, security lighting, and special facilities for people with disabilities, including wheelchair ramps, hearing induction loops and additional shelters on the platforms.

The new line will be officially launched at Cranbourne Station on Friday 24 March at 11am. Following the launch, which will also include a sausage sizzle and performance by a local school band, a free shuttle service will run between Cranbourne, Merinda Park and Dandenong stations every half hour between midday and 3pm. The Cranbourne line also features a magnificent new complex at Dandenong Station.

The \$6 million facility, reported in the last issue of Express, includes improved access to platforms, better customer information facilities, an air-conditioned waiting area, kiosk, closed-circuit video cameras, and a new footbridge.



Steering a steady COURSE

Women who work in public transport make the system appear more 'family friendly'.

That's the opinion of several speakers who took part in a recent national conference on issues affecting women and public transport.

Several suggested it was because some women felt less self-conscious when one of their children misbehaved, or if they had to ask for assistance.

The experience of two female Met drivers indicates that the public agrees.

Female drivers on Melbourne's tram and bus networks are now a fact of life, to the point where many passengers are beginning to declare their

preference. "Some passengers say male drivers travel too quickly," says Biddy Simon, a bus driver for 12 years at Footscray depot.

"A few men will step onto the bus and say: 'Oh, a woman driver'. But by the end of the trip they'll congratulate you on your driving."

Ms Simon says her job is all about public relations. "I like driving and mixing with the public. I know how to relate to passengers. It doesn't matter what age people are - whether they're young or old - I've had no problems whatsoever."

Ms Simon is one of four female drivers at Footscray, and one of six female drivers in the Met Bus system.

"When I first arrived here I felt a bit vulnerable, but I persevered. Now I have a really good time with the blokes... they give me the greatest respect."

Across town at Kew Tram Depot, driver Liz Campanaro agrees.

"The male drivers are very helpful. It wasn't the same 10 or 15 years ago, but now there are no problems," she says.

Like Biddy Simon, Ms Campanaro worked her way up through the conductor ranks. Kew now has 18 female drivers out of a total roll call of 103.

"You're 'one of the boys' at the Kew Depot because you're working with men all the time. There's no difference."

Ms Campanaro, a driver for the past three years, believes that gender presents no barrier when it comes to driving.

"Anyone can be a good driver. Whatever a man can do on this job, a woman can do."

The job is about public relations, helping people to get where they want to go without any fuss," Ms Campanaro says.

"It's also about gaining a sense of achievement from having done your job properly."



Biddy Simon: one of six female Met Bus drivers.



Liz Campanaro at the controls of a Melbourne tram.

Litter attack on track. Met Train recycling tackles litter problem. more overleaf



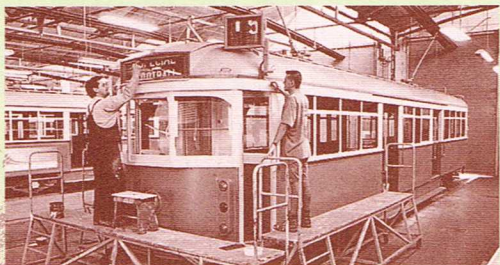
fellow traveller

News from the Victorian Public Transport Forum

BACK to basics

Melbourne's 53 'W' Class trams are about to receive the finishing touches to their recent major refurbishment.

Thanks to an initiative of the Forum and companion consultative council the 'W' Class Tram Implementation Monitoring Committee, the city's favourite trams will soon look as authentic as they did when they first ran off the production line, even down to the varnished louvred sunshades and leather straps.



Met Tram staff work to restore a W-class tram to its original state.

Almost every aspect of the trams' interiors - including upholstery, signs, floors and panelling - will come under the scrutiny of craftspeople at Met Tram's Preston Workshops.

The State Government is funding the detailed work, which is expected to be carried out progressively over four years.

Expressly yours

The Victorian Public Transport Forum was set up to advise the State Government on all public transport services, from the customer's point of view.

Now you can have your say. Simply write to the Forum at GPO Box 4910, Melbourne 3001, and let them know what you think about the system.

Whatever your point of view, the Forum would like to hear from you.

more join the REVOLUTION

The City Circle trams appear to have Melbourne residents and visitors in a whirl.

A recent survey shows that 5250 trips are made each day on the 8 trams that travel the city's perimeter. This compares with about 2000 trips a day at this time last year.

The survey also reveals that tourists comprise 48 per cent of the total number of passengers.

The burgundy and gold trams travel free of charge along Flinders, Spencer, Spring and Latrobe streets. You can catch them at any stop along the route.

Points of Order

"It's like a very big train set - the difference is you can't pick these trains up."

Leo Grande's 'train set' is Metrol, the computer system that controls all signals and points within Melbourne's inner railway area.

The system, which replaced the old signal boxes still seen around the Flinders Street yards, is responsible for the operation of the 151 trains that carry about 400,000 people around Melbourne each day.

If the tracks are Met Train's arteries, then Metrol is its brain, and heart. "When a train breaks down or there is a delay of some kind, a lot of people behind the scenes are very active," says Mr Grande, the acting manager of Train Running.

"While passengers in their seats are getting frustrated, Metrol is very busy. There's a buzz around the place to get the situation fixed as soon as possible so that normal services can be resumed."

The Metrol building in Batman Avenue may not look quite majestic, but it does have royal connections. Installed in 1981, the system was opened two years later by King Gustav of Sweden, the country that supplied the complex computer equipment.

The system is fully automatic, although operators - called train controllers - can override the computer at any time, such as rerouting a train if there is a delay, so that a good level of service is provided.

Metrol oversees all signals and points in the inner area, a sector bounded by South Kensington, Burnley, Epping, Heidelberg and Caulfield stations. Lines beyond the area are controlled by signal boxes.

The entire operation, says Leo Grande, who has been running trains for more than 20 years, is based upon a train-describer system. When a train begins its journey at an outlying station, signallers en route and train controllers assign it a four-digit number, which indicates where the train has come from and where it is headed.

Once it has entered the inner area, circuits beneath the rails transmit the train's position to the control room on the second floor of the Metrol building.

Here the number shows up on the controllers' banks of video display units, which track the train's progress along a series of interlocking spaghetti strands on screen, each representing a particular track. Each controller looks after a specified area.

Once the train has reached Flinders Street, controllers give it a new number for the outward journey. When the train has cleared the Metrol system, the signalling function is

handed back to the signal boxes.

While it might sound straightforward, it isn't. "Controllers are constantly juggling to meet demands, rerouting trains if there's a delay and so on," Mr Grande says.

"And if a train breaks down, they have to advise crews, crew supervisors, maintenance staff and signallers. They also send a PA message to stations down the line to let people know if a train is running late or if a disruption has occurred."

But Metrol is more than points and signals, its staff are also responsible for PIDS, the Passenger Information Display System that shows train times throughout Loop stations, and at Flinders Street, North Melbourne and Richmond stations. Controllers also monitor a series of screens showing conditions in tunnels at various points of the underground.



Leo Grande (right) and Gary Crombie at the controls of Melbourne's railway network.

Metrol's team of 70 controllers work shifts around the clock, even after the last train has run for the night. For even out of hours the rail system is still busy.

Between midnight and early morning, teams repair track and overhead wiring, and V/Line freight and special trains still rove the network.

Meanwhile at Metrol, a team of computer programmers busily feed special service timetable information into the computer and technical experts check equipment before the first train moves out before 5am.

The work is forever challenging. Leo Grande and his controllers have to be prepared for the unpredictability of natural events, such as damaging storms, and unforeseen demands of a special organised event where - even though it might be running late - trains have to be in the right place at the right time.

Leo Grande's train set is beyond the dreams of any child, but Melbourne's senior train controller keeps things in perspective.

"The other difference is that there are people on board. If there's any disruption, passengers have to be given first consideration. So we make sure we offer the best and safest service possible."

Met watch

Met Watch will feature in each issue of Express, to keep customers up to speed with the performance of their public transport service.

* Punctuality is based on running to within five minutes of the scheduled time. These figures are for the period between 11 December 1994 and 4 February 1995.

** Not all Met trams have Automatic Vehicle Monitoring at this stage, so punctuality figures are unavailable.



Seventy's Heaven... one Met trip



An early Tilling Stevens bus

This year marks the 70th anniversary of government bus travel in Melbourne - an era of public transport that probably began in a shower of sparks.

For the city's first fleet of Tilling Stevens buses ran on metal wheels, a far cry from the smooth-riding MAN Mark 2 buses that now ply most city routes.

Here, at a glance, is the Met's trip - from MMTB to PTC.

1925

The Melbourne's Metropolitan Tramways Board introduced the city's first bus service between Latrobe Street and Elsternwick Station.

1929

A deluxe bus (it boasted cane armchairs) was introduced to the fleet of 56.

1935

The city acquired its first diesel buses; a Leyland Lions and an Albion Valiant.

1936

The Footscray-Sunshine route began. Two bus depots opened at Footscray and Port Melbourne.

1938

Twenty Leyland Tigers joined the fleet, bringing it to 113.

1941

Female conductors were employed for the first time.

1947-54

The MMTB went on a buying spree and added 232 Leyland buses to its fleet.

1952

Conductors began collecting fares on the street. Honesty boxes were fitted to 45 double decker buses (the experiment proved unsuccessful and was not continued). 'Circulator loading' - boarding at the front door and disembarking at the rear - was introduced.

1954

Last trip by a double decker bus.

1955

Interior fluorescent lighting was introduced for the Olympic Games.

1962

The MMTB ordered 100 underfloor-engine buses.

1977

The first of the fleet's Volvo buses went into service.

1983

The MMTB became the MTA, the Melbourne Transit Authority.

1985

Automatic Vehicle Monitoring was introduced, enabling the monitoring of buses on the network.

1989

The MTA became the PTC, the Public Transport Corporation.

1993

Two thirds of Melbourne's bus routes were privatised. Met Bus began operation.

Train WITH the elite

The launch of the first of the Met's new Premium Stations signals a new era in safety and convenience for train travellers, says PTC Chief Executive Officer Mr Ian Dobbs.

The opening of the upgraded Mount Waverley Station in January gave commuters a glimpse of what they can expect when all 51 Premium Stations are operating by the middle of next year.

Mr Dobbs said that although the Met already provided an extremely safe public transport system, improved security facilities at the stations would offer commuters extra assurance, particularly at night.



"Most customers will appreciate these changes as we move the Met from a system to a service," he said.

Each Premium Station will incorporate a number of security measures including staffing from the first train to the last, improved lighting, enclosed waiting areas, closed-circuit television, and an increased presence of Customer Service Employees and Transit Police.

The stations selected to be upgraded are among Melbourne's busiest, and are located at regular intervals along all lines.

51 OF the best

Soon there will be a Premium Station near you...

Ashburton, Belgrave, Blackburn, Boronia, Box Hill, Brighton Beach, Broadmeadows, Camberwell, Carrum, Caulfield, Cheltenham, Clifton Hill, Coburg, Croydon, Dandenong, East Malvern, Elsternwick, Eltham, Essendon, Flagstaff, Flinders Street, Footscray, Frankston, Glenferrie, Glen Waverley, Greensborough, Heidelberg, Ivanhoe, Lilydale, Mitcham, Mordialloc, Mount Waverley, Museum, Newport, North Melbourne, Oakleigh, Pakenham, Parliament, Reservoir, Richmond, Ringwood, St Albans, Sandringham, South Yarra, Spencer Street, Springvale, Sunshine, Thomastown, Upper Ferntree Gully, Werribee, Williamstown.

litter ATTACK on track

Travellers on selected city train lines are about to witness a subtle colour change: Met Train is going green.

Public perception that an unclean rail system is also an unsafe one has prompted a new attack on the litter problem on Melbourne's rail system.

The Clean and Green Campaign, a recycling and community education campaign pioneered by Monash University, has in its sights the 800 garbage bags of rubbish removed each day from Met trains.

"Our system is one of the safest in the world," said Met safety and security manager, Mr Peter Shelton. "But if it is untidy, it's perceived to be unsafe."

The campaign was conceived by Ms Gracy Girardi, a member of Monash University's Centre for Innovation and Waste Management.

Ms Girardi said the campaign was designed to encourage people not only to travel by train, but also to consider the issue of recycling in the wider community.

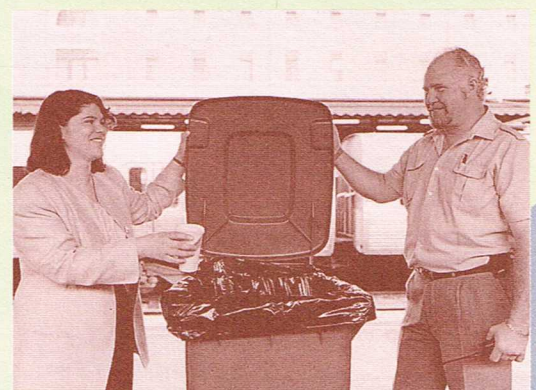
"The ultimate aim is to get people back on public transport by making trains cleaner, but we also hope to get the message across that waste minimisation is a community issue, and that people should recycle at every opportunity."

Ms Girardi said specially designed colour-coded recycling bins would be provided at selected stations, and their use explained in a series of posters and pamphlets.

The campaign will be launched in May at stations between Caulfield and Dandenong, on all City Loop stations, and at Footscray Station.

"Recycling is a very topical issue," Mr Shelton said. "Most councils have become very aware of that fact, and it seems only logical that people who recycle at home should be given the opportunity to become involved in recycling in public places as well."

Met Train will supply the necessary staff to help the Monash centre implement the campaign. It is expected that the trial will run for three months.



Ms Gracy Girardi (left) with the PTC's Roy Arrowsmith, who is responsible for implementing the program across the Met network.

Funding for the Clean and Green Campaign has been provided by the Victorian Recycling and Resource Recovery Council, a state authority responsible for ensuring that waste going to landfill is reduced by 50 per cent by the year 2000.

Travelling the AROUND the town free way in 16 languages

The 'unluckiest person ever' has just won a year's free travel on the Met, courtesy of Express and the Public Transport Corporation. Security Officer Julie Bousattout, an avowed nonstarter in the competition stakes, says that after her win she will now start thinking about taking tickets in Tatts. The prize, worth about \$1500, will pay for Ms Bousattout's daily return trip between Sydenham and Parliament Station. Keep an eye out for the next issue of Express, which will contain details of a brand new competition.



Julie Bousattout (sitting) with Chairperson of the Victorian Public Transport Forum, Leonie Burke.

Is someone you know having trouble translating their way around Melbourne?

The Public Transport Corporation now offers free city travel guides in 16 languages, showing tram and train networks and offering advice on ticketing and travel options.

They are available in Macedonian (Slavonic), Serbian, Greek, Italian, Japanese, French, German, Maltese, Turkish, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, Russian, Polish, Croatian and Arabic.

The guides may be obtained from major stations, Met shops and information centres, migrant resource centres, social clubs, senior citizens groups and English language groups.

Brochures that detail access for disabled non-English speakers are also available from Met outlets.

For information or a copy of either guide, call the Met Information Centre on 131 638.



Many CSEs can help customers in more than one language.

WHAT'S ON, WHEN, WHERE (and how to get there)

Event	Date	Location	How to get there
Melbourne Food & Wine Festival Celebrations on Met trams	26 February to 19 March	City Circle Trams	Catch a free City Circle tram between 11am and 3pm, and sample gourmet food along the way
International Motor Show	Friday 10 to Sunday 19 March	Exhibition Buildings	Catch the number 86 or 96 tram, or get off the train at Parliament Station and take a five minute walk across Victoria Parade
Blaupunkt Authentic Basketball Expo	11-13 March	Glasshouse	Catch a tram down Batman Avenue or walk from Richmond Station
Moomba	Friday 10 to Sunday 19 March	City and Alexandra Gardens	Catch any train to Flinders Street Station. Any tram on St Kilda Rd/Swanston Street will drop you at the gardens for the carnival and river festivities or at the City Square
Moomba Parade and Street Party	Saturday 11 March	City	Extra trains and trams will operate into the city before the parade and out from the city at the end of the parade and party
The Met Musical Trams	Sunday 12, Monday 13, Saturday 18 March	Swanston Street Walk	Catch Swanston Street Walk Trams between Flinders and Latrobe streets
The Met Berry St Bathub Dash	Monday 13 March	Yarra River (outside Melbourne University Rowing Club in the Alexandra Gardens)	See general Moomba listing above
Moomba River Pageant	Monday 13 March	Yarra River	See general Moomba listing above
Garden Week	11-19 March	Fitzroy Gardens	Catch any Flinders Street tram to the gardens
MVRC Alister Clark Stakes	18 March	Flemington	Race trains will run to Flemington from Flinders Street Station every 20 minutes between 11am and 1pm. Extra services will be provided for the return trip
Charity Race Meeting	19 March	Caulfield Racecourse	Catch the train to Caulfield Station
Airshow Downunder '95	21-26 March	Avalon Airport	Catch a train from the city and change at Werribee on to a V/Line service to Lara. Shuttle buses will drop passengers at the gate
Footscray Bus Depot Open Day	19 March	Footscray Bus Depot	Catch a number 223 bus or travel by train to the Footscray Railway Station
Rolling Stones Concert	27 & 28 March	MCG	Extra tram and train services will operate
Melbourne International Comedy Festival	1-23 April	Various	Contact Met Information on 131 638 for details for specific events
Duke of Norfolk Stakes	1 April	Flemington	Race trains depart Flinders Street Station every 20 minutes between 11am and 1pm
Easter Cup	15 April	Caulfield	Catch the train to Caulfield Station
Victoria Handicap	17 April	Caulfield	Catch the train to Caulfield Station
Anzac Day	25 April	City	Train services will operate to a Saturday timetable, with extra trains scheduled for the AFL football at the MCG
Anzac Day Race Meeting	25 April	Flemington	Race trains depart Flinders Street Station every 20 minutes between 11am and 1pm

For service details for all Melbourne events, contact the Met Information Centre on 131 638 (TTY facility 619 2727 for customers with a speech/hearing impairment).