

Vol 2 No 5 June/July 1986  
Staff Newspaper of the Metropolitan Transit Authority

# MET LINES



MORE PAINTED TRAMS  
— PAGE 31

# Message from the Managing Director

This month marks the beginning of the fourth year of operations for the MTA. The Authority was established on 1 July 1983 and the three years since have brought some major developments in Melbourne's public transport system.

The MTA has successfully established an integrated system of trains, trams and buses. Much of the credit for achieving this goal must go to all employees who have worked extremely hard under difficult circumstances.

Probably the things passengers find most attractive about the Met system is the integrated fare structure. In many cities of the world, passengers are still required to buy different tickets for different modes of transport. If one happens to be using two or more different modes of transport a day, fares could quickly mount up. The one ticket system enabling passengers to ride either trains, trams or buses, has been a real success story for the MTA.

There have been major achievements in other areas too. More rolling stock has been purchased in each area, new stations and depots have been built, power sources have been overhauled in one of the largest upgrading programs for years, train and tram tracks have been upgraded and bus routes improved.

More staff training programs have been introduced to enable employees to deal with the changes

to their area of work and improvements to work environments have been initiated.

Although we can all be proud of what has been achieved in such a relatively short time in all areas of our operations, we need to continue planning changes to the system which will meet the demands of the future.

The decisions we take now and in the immediate future, will ultimately affect the type of public transport system our children and our children's children will enjoy.

A number of bold initiatives are already planned to ensure that the system of the future will be the best, most efficient system of its time. The development of the Light Rail Transit System, decentralised rail maintenance and improved bus scheduling will all play a part in the future direction of the MTA.

There are many areas of the Met system where it is necessary to improve our services and by doing this we will attract many more passengers to the system.

The first three years of the MTA have been years of considerable change to our transport system, but those years are only the beginning. I am confident we will work together to further improve our system and service.

KEVIN SHEA  
Managing Director.

## Contents

Message from the Managing Director .....	2
Time no object to Clock Shop .....	3
Lost something? — Call Lost Property ..	4&5
Chemical Analysis helps protect the Met .....	6&7
Better station buildings for rail network .....	8&9
At the junction — Caulfield provides diverse services .....	10&11
Driving buses is not so easy .....	12&13
AVM system extended to trams .....	14&15
New Director General and MTA Chairman .....	15
First aid skills expanded .....	16
The Met beats the famine blues .....	17
Poetic thanks .....	17
Civil Branch — Invaluable contribution to the Met .....	18&19
Bridging the rail network .....	20
More safety zones for tram network ..	21&22
Letters of Appreciation .....	22
Healthful Hints .....	23
St. Albans Station centenary .....	23
Let's have a ball! .....	23
Gordon says goodbye .....	24
New look for Preston Workshops .....	25
Metrol keeps us moving .....	26&27
Shelters provide greater passenger comfort .....	28&29
A railway stalwart retires .....	30
Painted trams ride the tracks again .....	31
Garden competition update .....	32
Federal funding boost for trams .....	32
Extra comfort for tram travellers .....	33
Freedom of Information Act 1982 .....	33
Letters of Appreciation .....	34
Glen Waverley tops indoor cricket ladder .....	35
Lilydale go clear on footy ladder .....	36

# Time no object to Clock Shop



Mike Barker tests a bus brake valve after repairs have been completed. The testing equipment was designed and built by the employees at the Clock Shop.

Tram passengers are often intrigued to know exactly what is happening when they see a tram stop, the driver get out and key-punch one of those large green clocks which dot Melbourne's tram network.

As many of you already know, the 'clocking-in' process helps establish times of departure or arrival at these 'clocking-points' and can therefore give a good indication of on time running and affect any suggested alterations to schedules.

The clocks form an important part of the Met's tram operations but there is also a need to ensure that they are fully maintained and working to full capacity. This, amongst other things, is the job of employees at the Clock Shop.

Situated in the garage area of the North Fitzroy Bus Depot, the Clock Shop makes sure that all the tramway clocks are operational and accurate.

This department has been around for almost as long as the tramways itself. In the early days, a lot of time was spent on repairing the bell punches used on cable cars. Later, ticketing machine maintenance took up much of the time of employees at the shop, and later still, the emphasis shifted to the maintenance of the clocks on the tram network.

There are around 90 clocks on the network and unfortunately many of them are attacked by vandals or are just in need of a regular tune-up.

Before the morning peak, clocks are checked by Inspectors working a particular route. If some are found to be damaged or faulty, the Inspector notifies the Radio Centre, which in turn notifies the Clock Shop. A team is immediately despatched to fix the damaged apparatus.

In an average week the Clock Shop is required to repair about 20 of the clocks and Mondays are typically the busiest day in this department. It seems that weekends breed an extra spurt of violence and this adds to the problems of repair.

There are currently six employees at the Clock Shop — five Instrument Makers and one apprentice Instrument Maker. They are supervised by the Leading Hand, Peter Cohen.

Peter joined the Shop in 1956. In those days he was employed as an apprentice Fitter and Turner at the Preston Workshops. He was invited to transfer to the Clock Shop on a six monthly exchange trial with one of their apprentices to enable both men to get a better overview of the functions of the different areas. Thirty years later, Peter is still with the Clock Shop and loving it.

To become a fully qualified Instrument Maker one must first take on a four year apprenticeship. This includes one day a week of classroom tuition and the rest of the time is spent learning the job first hand. A good basic understanding and knowledge of instruments is also an advantage.

Nowdays the activities of the Clock Shop are moving from clock repair and maintenance into other areas. Whereas at one time most work was done for the tram network, now the breakdown is 70 per cent for buses and 30 per cent for trams.

Work is also carried out on the maintenance and repair of such things as bus brake valves and gear box electrical components. Repairing door locks on the more modern trams and also at offices around the network, forms another part of the department's activities.

Generally, mechanical work done on bus components might be as a result of an overflow from the garage maintenance section, or following a request from a particular depot. While components generally stand up to a bit of punishment fairly well, a noticeable leak will signal to the driver that something has gone amiss and more often than not, it will be up to the Clock Shop to rectify the problem.

To test such components as brake valves, there is a need for special testing equipment. This was all designed and built by employees at the Shop. They found it easier to do this themselves as they knew exactly what they wanted and what standards the equipment should meet. Basically the design and construction of test panels became a one man job although input from other members of the team helped to modify the design incorporating the collective ideas of the whole team.

The team aspect is very important to the operation of this section of the Met. By design, each job is interchangeable and all employees are capable of carrying out a variety of tasks. While this makes the operation of the workshop more efficient, it also encourages the workers to become



Charlie Rooni works on the lathe at the Clock Shop. Charlie is one of five full time Instrument Makers at the workshop.

more versatile, which helps create greater job satisfaction.

Operating within the Met's Tram and Bus Division, the Clock Shop is a unique organisation. Although there are organisations outside the transport industry which offer similar services, this is probably the only section which is involved with work of such a specific nature.

Repair and maintenance procedures which may have evolved out of a past era are now taking on more modern concepts and providing much needed back-up to many areas of the tram and bus network.

Although time is always evident at the Clock Shop, its employees always have time for another job, and we can be thankful they do.

FOOTNOTE: Leading Hand at the Clock Shop, Peter Cohen is also Secretary and a member of the Tramways Band. The band is always on the look-out for new members. Any enquiries regarding the band should be directed to Peter at the Clock Shop on 618 3352.

## Bumper Issue

Due to production difficulties, the June issue of Met Lines could not be published. However, many of the stories scheduled to be included in the June issue, have been included in this special bumper issue. Met Lines will return to its normal publication frequency (monthly) from the August issue.

## Cover Picture



Using one of the intricate instruments in the Preston laboratories, Chemist, Graham Cox, tests substances to be used in the Met network. The skills of the Preston Chemists affect us all in one way or another. For full story see page 6.



Leading Hand, Peter Cohen (left) assists Instrument Maker, Ray Brun repair an electrical valve used in the gear box of the Mark VI buses.

## Lost something? — Call lost property!

Archaeologists claim they can tell what a long-lost society was like simply by sifting through its refuse. The same still probably applies today. Using the same analogy, we can probably draw a fairly accurate profile of our customers by looking through the myriad of objects which end up at the Lost Property office.

The central collecting area for property mislaid around the rail network is at Flinders Street. This area forms only part of the left luggage department at the station. The luggage hall or cloakroom also offers 96 individual lockers which can be rented out at only 10 cents a time, a fee which has remained static over the years. The lockers are cleared every morning and if property is found at this time it is put aside to be collected by the owners. Most of the lockers are in constant use.

On the other hand, customers may wish to leave items under the watchful eye of the officer on duty and this facility is available at a higher cost than the lockers.

But it's probably the lost property area which creates most interest. Flinders Street acts as a recording station for all unclaimed items. Usually if lost items are handed into suburban stations, they will keep the property for a short time and inform the central records section. At the end of a month, all unclaimed property is sent to a central store at Spotswood where it is periodically auctioned off.

While quite a large number of items are handed into individual suburban stations, Flinders Street is without doubt the station with the largest total of lost items to deal with. Around 900 items of lost property end up in the cloakroom at Flinders Street each month.

Some items are found at the end of a journey by guards or cleaners, but the majority of articles (over 75%) are handed in by passengers. This goes to prove that there are still a lot of honest people around. In the case of misplaced money handed in,



Peter Lopriorre clears out one of the 96 lockers available to the public in the Cloakroom. The lockers are cleared each morning and if any property is left overnight, it is stored until collected by the owner.



A commuter collects an item of left luggage at Flinders Street cloakroom. Tony Germana does the serving.



Jerry Stylianou answers another inquiry regarding an item of lost property. The Flinders Street cloakroom and lost property area receives up to 1000 inquiries a week.

the finder is always given a receipt for the amount found which is then remitted to the cash office.

The lost property area currently receives about 1000 inquiries a week, either in person or by phone. The cloakroom amenities are open between 6 am and 11 pm on weekdays, which keeps the five employees working split shifts, constantly on the go.

While some of the items found might raise a few eyebrows elsewhere, the workers in the lost property area at Flinders Street are almost blasé about the different items of property which find their way to their domain.

Old perennials such as umbrellas, reading glasses and handbags are commonplace. But other less likely items are starting to find their way to lost property. These include false teeth, bras, vibrators, video recorders and cameras and magazines of dubious content. Sums of money (sometimes quite large) are also handed in frequently.

A large 'ledger type' book is used to enter all relevant details of recovered property including date, location found, name of finder (if any) and full description of the property. A numbered sequence is then used for identification purposes and the property is filed away into a separate locker representing the particular date on which the item was found.

One of the most surprising aspects of the activities of the lost property area is that a lot of high quality merchandise is being misplaced and finding its way to Flinders Street. But most surprising of all is that just a bit over half the items handed in are not claimed. This makes little sense when one considers the value of some of the items concerned.



Attending to items of left luggage and lost property can be a hectic task. Here Stan Mintzis checks on some luggage waiting collection.

We are all a little forgetful at one time or another and most of us have misplaced items in the past. But usually these are smaller items which are easily overlooked. It is far more difficult to understand how people could lose such bulky objects as art folders or framed paintings. Yet the number of large art folders which find their way to lost property are testimony to the fact that some people would apparently lose anything.

A sign of the times these days is the number of credit cards which end up in lost property and naturally agitated owners are keen on their return. When an inquiry is made regarding lost property, a full description is required to ensure that the property is returned to its rightful owner.

While most people can give a reasonably accurate picture of the lost item, some are very vague which makes it more difficult for those on duty to positively identify the property in question.

Once a positive identification is made, customers can retrieve their property during the normal operating hours of the cloakroom and are required to sign for all items returned.

Although some may see lost property areas as an inevitable nuisance, Stationmasters and the employees of the Flinders Street lost property area see it quite differently. They say it is a service to the public which offers the opportunity to extend the public relations role a little further.

A bit of gentle PR is often required when people who have mislaid property contact the lost property area, only to find the item has not been handed in. In this case, some people get very upset, particularly when credit cards or sums of money have been mislaid.

On the other hand, when relieved owners find their property has been handed in, some can be quite ecstatic and grateful. Others are less than gracious. The

difference in the attitudes of people who have either lost or regained property, is a source of bemusement to the employees in the cloakroom at Flinders Street.

The area that serves both as cloakroom, locker room, luggage area and lost property department at Flinders Street has been around almost as long as the station itself and the wear and tear is beginning to show. However, plans are under way to upgrade the area as part of the overall redevelopment program at the station.

People have been forgetting things since the dawn of time and it could be argued that forgetfulness in people is becoming worse. There's little evidence as to why people forget things with such regularity, but certainly the pressure of modern day living creates a perfect environment for the forgetful.

In a 'perfect' society there would be no

need for lost property departments. Everyone would protect their property. But of course society is not perfect. Anyone who has ever lost something (and that probably means most of us) can testify to the embarrassment, if not trauma of the situation. Luckily lost property areas like the one at Flinders Street which serves the Met's rail network, help alleviate our traumas. Without them we would simply be lost.

An example of the appreciation expressed by passengers who have recently regained property is contained in the following letter which was first published in the May 1986 issue of Met Lines. It shows the importance the public places on the activity of retrieving lost property:

17 March, 1986

Dear Sir,

I would like to place on record my genuine appreciation for the excellent service your department gave in recovering a suit left in the train from Mt. Waverley this morning (imagine my concern).

Upon discovering my mistake, I contacted the attendant on duty at Parliament — Miss Robyn Hunt. She made great efforts to track it down or the train at the Loop stations and Flinders Street, where it was checked out. I even ran to Flinders Street myself — to no avail.

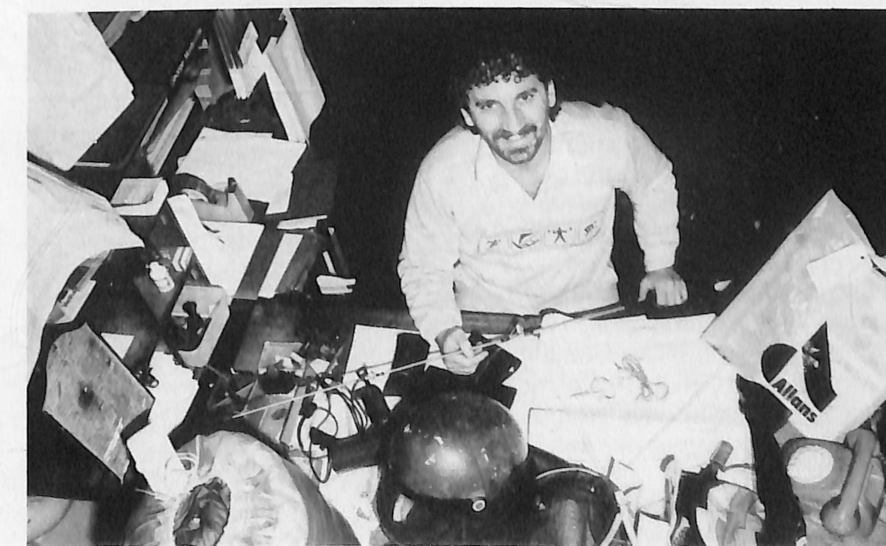
She called back to report that it had not yet been found at 9.30 am.

Upon checking at 11.30 am, I was told that it had been found by the cleaning staff in the yard and would be returned. Miss Hunt also called me later to report this.

I express great appreciation for the efforts of the lady concerned and the conscientious efforts of the yard staff in returning it, including the foreman who actually returned the garment and who I met in 'Lost and Found'.

PETER FREELAND

Mt. Waverley



David Bartolò displays some of the items which find their way to the lost property office at Flinders Street. Around 900 items of lost property are stored at Flinders Street each month.

## Chemical analysis helps protect the Met

As we have noted in previous issues of Met Lines, many people in diverse areas of employment are needed to make the Met work. Much of the vital work needed to keep the system running is done behind the scenes — but without it, the system would not operate.

A case in point is the work carried out by the two chemists at the laboratories at Preston Tram Workshops. Graham Cox and Garry Smith provide a comprehensive service which affects a wide range of things from passenger safety right down to the quality of soap we use for washing up.

The laboratories were first set up in the 1940s and in those early days a lot of work was done on testing asphalt or concrete quality to be used on tram tracks. This is an activity with which the laboratories are associated with to this day.

Following the war, commodity shortages and the resultant economic hard times had their effect. As a result, the laboratories were required to fulfil some unique functions. For instance they were required to make up and supply ink to fill biros used in the M&MTB of those days. With the passing years of course, this eventually became time wasting and uneconomic.

When Chemical Engineer, Frank Cummins, who now supervises the laboratories, arrived in 1956, the activities had diversified somewhat to cater for the needs of the growing tram and bus networks. There was more analysis of paint and oil which was used around the system and new technology was providing new challenges to the chemists.

Graham Cox joined the laboratories as an Industrial Chemist over 20 years ago. He had been an Industrial Chemist for a large manufacturing group for some time, but says he was involved in only one aspect of analysis whereas in his present position there is a variety of activities. This opinion is backed up by Garry Smith, who, unlike Graham, came straight from university to the Met. Nevertheless, he says it is the variety of work that gives him the most satisfaction also.

Since Graham first started at Preston, he has seen the network grow and the analytical problems and associated work change as a

result.

"We've become a central testing point for many products used in various areas of the network," says Graham. "When a product comes into the store, we analyse it to make sure that what we're paying for is what we are getting. With regular suppliers we know we can rely on specifications being met, although periodical checks are made. With new suppliers we always make a test to ensure that specifications are met".

The specifications themselves are determined following consultation between the laboratory staff and the area which will eventually be using the product. The input of the laboratory personnel can be critical as they can identify the best components for a particular function.

Analysis of oil and petrol is a critical area of activity for the laboratories.

"We use about 5 million litres of fuel a year in our bus fleet," explains Graham, "so it is essential that oil and petrol is of the highest standard. We have deliveries every day and at every delivery we take a sample to make a quick check to ensure there's no contamination. Then at every tenth delivery we take a sample for a more comprehensive analysis".

The analysis of fuels used in our bus fleet plays an essential part in

keeping the network moving. But it also has a significant economic impact.

Some time ago, laboratory workers found that the quality of oil being used in some buses was not up to standard, simply because no check of the quality had previously been made. When the chemists began to analyse oil samples and recommend changes to ensure the highest grade oil was being used, they found that the interval between oil changes for buses could be doubled, thus saving a large amount of money. Thanks to the chemists at Preston, buses now run in the most economical way possible.

Safety is another aspect which forms an important part of the activities of the chemists. Work environments are regularly tested for pollution levels ensuring that employees have a safe workplace. Testing is done by means of a Drager pump which simply samples the air and records the level of pollution. If above safety limits, action can be taken immediately to rectify the situation.

Testing at the workshops is done on a monthly basis and if requested by garages or other areas, the laboratories will provide the same testing service to these workplaces.

Passengers can also be thankful for the work of the chemists at



Chemist Garry Smith pictured using a machine to test the thickness of oil. Analysis of fuels forms a large part of the activities of the chemists.



Graham Cox (right) and Garry Smith discuss the results of a test on some materials at Preston laboratories.

Preston. Among other safety aspects, analysis is carried out on the fire retardant properties of seating material used on trams and buses. Specifications have since been drawn up for a material which, while it burns, burns very slowly, allowing passengers caught in a tram or bus fire, to escape the danger of an inferno. The foam rubber used in the padding of the seats has also been specified to be fire retardant following tests at the laboratories.

But the list of services doesn't stop there. The work done by the chemists at Preston touches practically all of us in one way or another.

"I suppose it's fair to say that mostly we work in with the engineering sections, the stores and the running sheds, although we do try to be technical advisers to all areas who need us," says Graham. "We can, and do, test products for a range of uses which may be considered fairly basic. Things like paints, polishes, cleaning soaps, solvent mixtures, such as those used in sealings for tram roofs, and demisting and cleaning solutions used on safety spectacles, are all tested in the Preston laboratories".

With the advance of technology in our system there are bound to be some significant changes in the areas with which the chemists work. Although technology can solve some of the old problems which seem to have dogged the system for years, it can also bring with it, an entirely new set of problems.

Graham says nowadays there is more work associated with electrical functions, particularly in the tram network. There is a greater need for analysis and specifications of the correct material used in contacts for instance. While a certain material

may be used by the manufacturer of a product, in the belief that he is using the best possible product, the material may not be compatible with either specifications laid down, or for that matter, other areas which are required to work in conjunction with the new material. Costly delays caused by unexplained breakdowns, and the resultant repairs, can be overcome by detailed analysis by the chemists at Preston.

So while a number of functions carried out by the laboratories have changed over the years, more recent developments have provided an extended work load.

The recently passed legislation governing the storage of dangerous chemicals and clear indication of this fact, has had a dramatic impact on the Preston laboratories.

"With the advent of Hazchem and the supporting legislation, there was a need to identify areas within the Met which stored such substances and establish a register," explains Graham. "Firstly we had to circulate a general memo to all sections requesting information on what sort of substances were stored, in what quantities and what they were used for. Hazchem signs were also issued to all relevant sections.

"When we had the information back from the various areas, we were able to compile a list of all hazardous substances stored and where they are stored. This is kept up-to-date and provides all the information that could be required. Despite the fact that it was an enormous job to set up the register, it is important that we have such data readily available."

In fact the Preston laboratories have become the nerve centre for all information on hazardous substances stored around the network. So again, they're playing an

important safety role in the network as a whole. The work carried out by the laboratories in this area has been recognised and they have now been nominated by the MTA as the most relevant section to monitor the use and safety aspects of hazardous chemicals under the auspices of the Occupational Health Act.

The work carried out by the chemists at the Preston laboratories is recognised as playing a vital role in the transport network, not only by the MTA, but by authorities outside the industry as well.

The laboratories have been formally recognised as having the necessary expertise to test metals and other relevant materials, by the National Australian Testing Association. This recognition is not at all easy to achieve and is a real 'feather in the cap' of workers at the laboratories.

Although at first glance it may be difficult for some to understand how chemists contribute to the operation of the Met, their work can be seen to be just as important as any other. They provide the insurance in the industry, making sure that products that employees or passengers use, are of the highest quality and safe, and environments in which we work are free from substances which could affect our health.

So next time you're using a product provided in your work area, even if it happens to be soap, spare a thought for the chemists at Preston. Chances are they carried out analysis to ensure you receive the best product possible.

## Driving buses is not so easy

What are some of the most stressful occupations? Doctor? Lawyer? Politician? Stockbroker? Airline Pilot? Try Bus Driver.

It will come as no surprise to those currently driving buses that bus driving is recognised as one of the top three most stressful jobs. It certainly comes as no surprise to Noel Donchi, Bus Training Instructor at the Met's Tram and Bus Division training school at Hawthorn.

"It's my opinion that driving a bus is one of the most difficult and stressful jobs a person can take on," says Noel who has been with the tramways for 38 years and an Instructor for 17 of those years.

"People don't realise what's involved in driving a bus and the problems of manoeuvring. In many ways, buses are far harder to handle than semi-trailers. There is a greater need to be alert, to always be on the look-out for traffic problems and a need to react quicker because, unlike a truck driver, a bus driver is constantly starting and stopping his vehicle and the fact that passengers, not freight, are carried by buses, adds to the list of things which are always on the

bus driver's mind."

Noel, who has an unashamedly ardent admiration for bus drivers of today, says the person who drives a bus is more of an individual than drivers of most other vehicles.

"When he or she is on the road, the bus driver is in complete control of the vehicle. He or she alone must make decisions about constant traffic problems and the safety and comfort of passengers. I think bus drivers are a particular breed."

But it's one thing to want to drive a bus and another to be actually doing it. And it's not as easy as one might think to become a driver.

"The first criteria for anyone who applies to be a bus driver is that they must have a full licence", explains Noel. "So of course they must be 21 or over.

"They begin by being conductors on trams and must serve in that position for at least six months. When applications for learner drivers are called for, applicants are put on a selection list in order of seniority of their present position.

"Each successful applicant is given a thorough medical before

joining the training course and is then required to undergo a check-up every third year. Classes are restricted to three or four applicants a week to ensure they have as much close supervision as possible."

A lot of learning is crammed into the bus driver training course but once successfully through the course, the learning process continues out on the job.

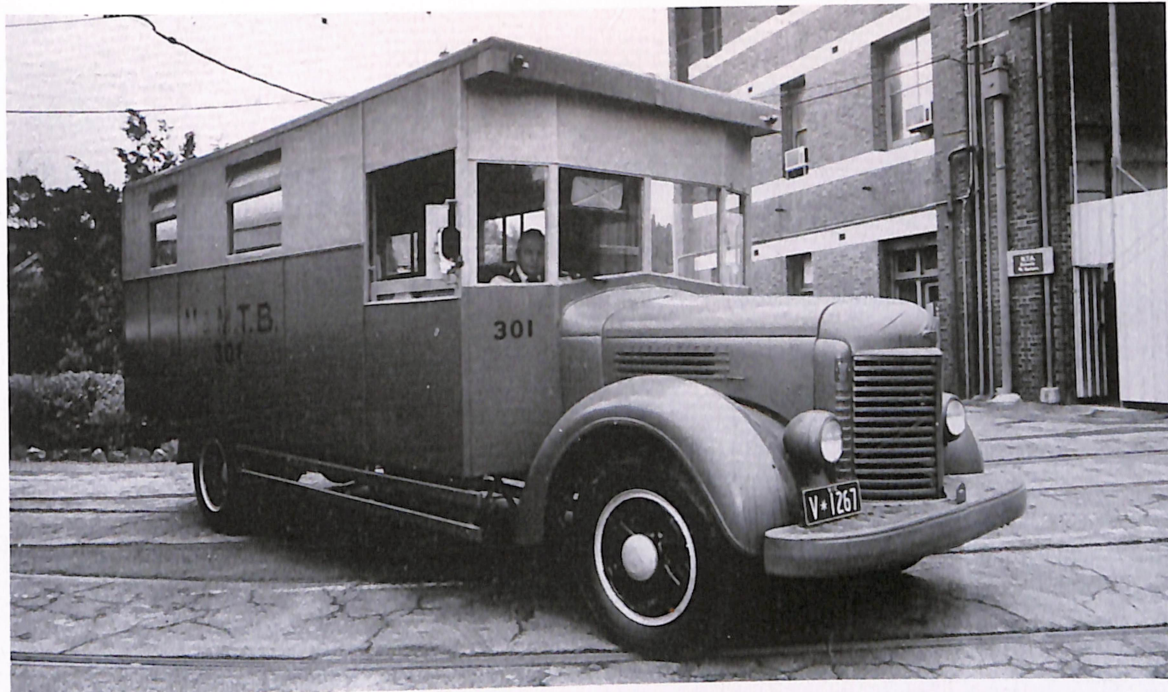
The first aim of the course is for drivers to have their licences endorsed. A few days before the course commences, trainees receive a little yellow book, the contents of which must be learnt by heart. The book, 'Driver Licence Endorsements: Road Law Questions', becomes compulsory reading, for without the knowledge it contains, the trainee can't get past first base.

Then six days of comprehensive study (theoretical and practical) begin at the Hawthorn Training Centre.

After a brief introduction to the Met, trainees are taught about defensive driving, mirror use, indicator use, three point turns, bus controls, cornering, skid control, accident procedure and public relations to mention just a few of the items covered. Videos help to explain certain aspects of bus operations more clearly.

Classroom periods are interspersed by actual driver training in a bus. This is done at the Fishermens Bend testing area which is ideal for training as it has all the traffic hazards imaginable and certainly gives trainees a good appreciation of actual driving conditions.

On the sixth day of the course trainees are assigned to a particular depot and report to a depot trainer who is responsible for guiding them through the next two weeks of actually driving a service bus. Initially trainees learn of depot procedures, ticketing etc, are supplied with locker facilities and are briefed



Noel Donchi pictured at the controls of a veteran of Melbourne's bus fleet, which has been lovingly restored by apprentices in various areas of the Met. This 1930s model is stored at the Hawthorn training centre.

about routes covered by that particular depot.

On the second day of depot training, trainees get behind the wheel and drive buses on scheduled services while still under supervision. This way they gain a greater appreciation of local driving conditions, routes covered and passenger boardings in the area.

During the training period at the depot a Student Training Card is kept by the depot trainer and updated periodically. The card records the hours spent training, in what vehicles, over which routes, and general driver progress. Comments regarding the suitability of the trainee are also recorded.

Although driver supervision is gradually wound down after two weeks of depot training, the new recruits remain probationary drivers for a further six months and a record is kept of progress during this period also.

The depot instructors themselves are also a product of the Hawthorn Training School and so the methods used in initial training are carried through the course of the Bus Driver trainee program.

Once out on the road, the Met's bus drivers have the opportunity to update their skills

to ensure they are still as alert and traffic-wary as ever.

"We run an advanced driver school for drivers who have been out on the system for a while", says Noel. "These drivers are selected at random and are invited to take part and drivers are always very supportive of the school.

"When a driver may have had a set-back in one area of his skills, we find that the advanced driving course provides him with a 100 per cent recovery rate. The course is run over three days and is very comprehensive and testing. It's a good way for drivers to make sure they've retained all they were taught while being trained initially and the drivers can see the value of the course for this reason".

Noel is assisted at the Bus Drivers Training School by two other instructors — Ray Hillyear and Alf Ruby, together with other qualified personnel who can fill the place of any of the three regular instructors. The school is managed by Jim Bremner.

Particular emphasis is given to public relations and passenger requirements during the training course and trainees accept the need to always be 'passenger conscious'.

Out on the road where

problems can occur through no fault of the driver, the theory of good customer relations may occasionally be tested. But Noel Donchi believes that drivers are often unfairly treated by passengers, simply because they (the passengers) don't always understand the problems in driving a bus.

"Drivers often have to take a lot of criticism from passengers simply because they're there in the firing line. The problem may not be attributable to the driver but he or she will get the blame and this adds to the stress the driver is already under."

It is quite ludicrous to compare the driving conditions pertaining to the family car with those pertaining to passenger buses. But sadly many people do just that and things which may be achieved in the driving of a car, just can't be achieved in the driving of a bus.

So next time you're on a bus, or following one in dense traffic, spare a thought for the driver. His job is not as easy as you might think. Fortunately though, with the standard of training provided by Noel Donchi and his colleagues, you can be assured you are in good hands when travelling on a bus driven by a Met driver.



Instructor Noel Donchi (right) explains the bus controls during a training session at the Bus Driver School at Hawthorn.

# AVM System extended to Trams



Transport Minister, Tom Roper gets a first hand briefing on how the AVM system works from Fleet Operations Centre Supervisor, Pat Nixon, as television crews report the good news of the extended service.

The development of new technology in a number of areas of the Met has helped meet the running demands of a growing service. But few developments can equal the impact the introduction of AVM, has had on the system.

AVM stands for Automatic Vehicle Monitoring. The Monitoring system is a radio-based command system which automatically determines the location and status of every vehicle fitted with a receiver.

The system collects information on the location of vehicles and processes this for the system controllers who are

able to communicate with the drivers of the vehicles and initiate immediate adjustments to the service in response to problems.

Management information is also collected and analysed so that vehicle schedules can be prepared on the basis of detailed and up-to-date data.

In its fully expanded form, the system can monitor 2000 vehicles and handle 2000 separate trips simultaneously on 450 different routes.

Premier John Cain opened the Met's Fleet Operations Centre early last year and since then the system has continued to grow.

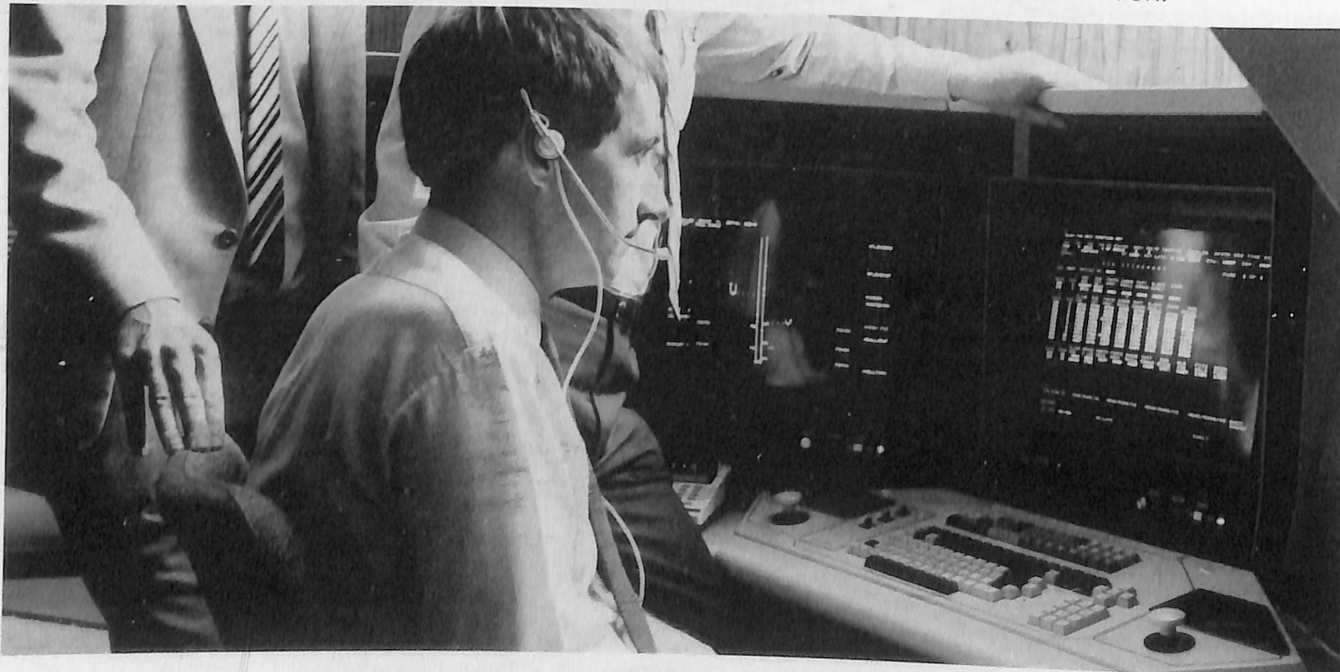
The Centre is housed in a

building originally used as a cable tram engine house. Constructed in 1886, the building is classified by the National Trust. Inside it's a very different picture today as the interior of the building has been completely refurbished and contains some of the most modern computer equipment around.

Currently buses from the Doncaster, Fitzroy and Footscray Depots are operating with AVM equipment and the change to the bus network has been quite marked.

Controllers at the Fleet Operations Centre can now monitor the movement of these buses by watching television screen monitors which relay the relevant information as colour graphic displays. Different coloured symbols are used to indicate the on time running of vehicles.

This allows operators to assess whether the vehicle is maintaining its schedule and, if not, how adjustments to the journey can be made to correct the situation. This information can then be relayed to the driver who, if practical, can take immediate action.



A view of the intricate monitors at the AVM centre which can show operators the current status of vehicles out on the network.



One of the Met's Z Class tram fleet — the first of the tram models to be fitted with the AVM equipment.

Often the controllers will be informed of an accident which may be blocking a route used by one of the buses fitted with the AVM equipment. The information and suggested alternative route can then be relayed to the driver who can change the route to miss the accident scene, and inform passengers of the change to the journey. The operators at the Centre can also speak directly to the passengers by way of a loud speaker connected to the communication equipment in the vehicle.

But the most important aspect of the AVM system is probably its ability to improve safety and security for passengers and crew. Occasionally, and particularly on late night runs, passengers and crews can be threatened by other passengers behaving in a loutish manner. When there is a group of offenders it has often been difficult in the past to take effective action. However, with the AVM system, the driver is able to activate an alarm system which brings immediate response from the Control Centre. Depending on how serious the incident is, MTA personnel and/or police officers may be called to assist the crew to evict the offending passengers. Recently Transport Minister,

Tom Roper, toured the Fleet Operations Centre and announced that work had just commenced on fitting trams with communications equipment as an extension to the AVM program.

Initially Z Class trams at a number of depots will be fitted. The idea behind fitting a certain number of trams at a range of

depots instead of all trams at one depot first, is again, safety.

By having trams fitted with the AVM equipment operating from a number of depots, late night runs will be provided with greater security.

The total cost of extending the AVM system to all Met buses and trams will be around \$10 million. About \$5 million has already been spent in setting up the system and installing equipment in the bus fleet. The aim is to have the system fully operational across the network by the middle of next year.

Development of the AVM system together with Metrol's program, indicates that the operation of the Met is becoming more closely connected with high technology. The developments in this area will help improve the system and provide passengers with a more efficient overall network.

## New Director General and MTA Chairman

Recently, Mr. Russ Ingersoll was appointed Director General of Transport. He also assumes the role of Chairman of the MTA.

Mr. Ingersoll is a distinguished businessman who is recognised as one of Victoria's foremost achievers in the public service arena.

After a successful career with the New South Wales Public Works Department where he served as Assistant Director, Mr. Ingersoll was appointed General Manager of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works.

His achievements in that position are well known and are highly regarded by various sections of the community. In short, he drastically cut operating costs while improving efficiency. To do this he had to take some radical measures but he proved they were workable measures.

The initiative and perception of challenging situations displayed by Mr. Ingersoll in previous positions will be invaluable in areas concerning the MTA.

In a recent interview, Mr. Ingersoll was quoted as saying that workers need and should have a say in the way the organization they work for, operates. He says he is always willing to discuss long-term strategy and reasons for taking certain decisions, with employee representatives.

That form of open consultative dialogue will be welcomed by us all.



Russ Ingersoll, recently appointed Director General of Transport and Chairman of the MTA.

# Civil Branch – Invaluable contribution to The Met

To keep the Met's transport network functioning a large team of maintenance workers is required and the number of diverse areas which need constant attention would surprise many.

In the case of the tram and bus networks, the Civil Engineering Branch has a number of responsibilities which affect practically every area of tram and bus operations.

The Branch is located in South Melbourne on land adjoining the South Melbourne Depot and the place is a hive of activity.

Apart from the construction of new tram tracks or facilities, the Branch carries out maintenance procedures in a number of areas. Currently there are 237 employees at Civil Branch. Of these, 37 are employed full time on cleaning duties. This ranges from the cleaning of depots, interchange areas and tram and bus shelters, to the maintenance of garden areas around the network. Civil Branch is also responsible for the upkeep of Wattle Park, MTA's large parkland and recreation area.

An extension to this section is the activities of the tram scrubber cars which travel around the network, cleaning rail of debris which, if allowed to build up, can cause problems to the smooth operation of the tram network. Scrubber cars are also used to clean concrete on newly laid track and to remove leaves and tar which can cause skidding.

Scrubber cars provide a twenty four hour, five day week service. Two scrubber cars operate during the night to alleviate possible delays to traffic flow and one operates in the afternoon.

By far the biggest percentage of work carried out by Civil Branch relates to tram track construction and maintenance. The construction of new line has been a high priority in recent times with the modification of certain tracks and the extension of others (particularly Bundoora). Tram track upgrading is another area which in recent times has kept the Civil Branch busy.

The program to upgrade the tram network by laying concrete to surface base began some time ago and about 70 per cent of the network has now been upgraded providing tram passengers with a smoother ride.

Other general maintenance work such as track realignment also adds to the track maintenance procedures carried out by Civil Branch. But the services don't stop there.

Civil Branch is also responsible for the construction and installation of safety zones around the network. Currently this program is run in conjunction with the RTA's Fairway system, although the actual installation of the zones is still carried out by Civil Branch. The yellow concrete prow used on zones is manufactured at South Melbourne and the fencing is bought in from contractors.

The erection of new bus and tram shelters and the maintenance of existing ones also forms part of the activities of Civil Branch. There are currently 600 shelters around the network and anything up to 40 new shelters are installed each year. The location for installation is always discussed in detail with local councils to ensure commuters have the most convenient and comfortable facilities.

However, the addition of further shelters places extra strain on the maintenance crews who are required to keep the facilities up to scratch in the face of increasing vandalism and untidy habits of commuters.

Civil Branch is also responsible for a round the clock service called Tramways Emergency. Crews that operate this section are required to be on duty 24 hours a day to answer a variety of calls affecting tram operations from derailed vehicles to faulty doors and lights.

In fact work carried out at night forms a large and regular part of the activities of the Civil Branch and

currently about 30 employees are rostered on to work night shift.

The various maintenance procedures carried out by Civil Branch are often made more difficult by a number of reasons. Track work is often carried out in areas of heavy traffic flow and this can impede progress although of course it is understood that the service must be allowed to continue to run. Closing certain sections of line at off peak times does help, but this is not always possible.

Although the maintenance problems are ongoing, Manager Civil Engineer, Alan Trist, says that things have changed for the better in certain areas. Alan, who has been with the Civil Branch for 14 years, says, on the whole, track maintenance procedures have improved in recent years because of improved and more efficient machinery. He says a lot of manual work was involved for many years, which has now been replaced by high tech machinery, some of which includes sophisticated appliances and on board closed circuit TV monitors.

The range of activities carried out by the Tram and Bus Civil Branch at South Melbourne is quite staggering.

The real value of the work of Civil Branch is incalculable. Suffice to say that without it our tram and bus networks wouldn't be nearly as good as they are.



The installation of tram safety zones around the network forms an important part of the activities of Civil Branch.



Peter Kargas makes some important repairs to track on a section of the tram network. The biggest percentage of work carried out by Civil Branch relates to track maintenance and construction.



Rail fabrication for use in the tram network forms an important function at Civil Branch. Here Michele Giannetta works on a section of rail at the South Melbourne yards.



Track upgrading on a section of line at Windsor. About 70 percent of the tram network has now been upgraded with concrete to surface base.



Track reconstruction at Preston Workshops is being carried out to accommodate delivery of the LRVs due to enter extensive service shortly. Gangs from Civil Branch are also involved in this project.



Steve Chambers welds a track joint on a section of tram line in Burke Road, a busy section of the network.



Working on a section of track in preparation for upgrading work. From left to right: P. Lombardi, S. Luci. The flagman controls traffic flow.

## Bridging the Rail Network

We have all been made well aware of the enormous amounts of money which have been ploughed into Melbourne's public transport system in recent years. Around \$700 million has been spent in various areas since the MTA was formed. A high percentage of that amount has been committed to the purchase of new rolling stock, but expenditure in other areas such as overhead wiring rehabilitation, station and depot rebuilding and track maintenance, has also been significant.

One area which has been largely overshadowed in this spending spree is the building and/or maintenance of bridges which carry or cross rail lines around the network. Since MetRail was formed almost three years ago, 20 bridges have been reconstructed around the rail network at a cost of \$8.4 million.

Ten road bridges (ie; bridges carrying road traffic over railway lines) have been upgraded at a total cost of \$6 million. These are at Armadale, Brighton, Camberwell, Dandenong, Eltham, Hawksburn, Prahran (2 sites), Richmond and South Yarra.

Four rail bridges (ie; bridges used by rail traffic to cross roadways or waterways etc) have been reconstructed at a total cost of \$1.4 million. These are at Altona, Ivanhoe, North Melbourne and Syndal.

A further \$1 million has been spent on the construction or upgrading of six footbridges at Armadale, Fairfield, Footscray, Hampton, Murrumbeena and Westgarth.

Of the twenty bridges concerned, the majority were only partially reconstructed. For instance, the major structural work of the existing substructure was left and the bridging or decking replaced. It is planned that a further six bridges (one road, four rail, and one footbridge) will be upgraded during the remainder of this year at a cost of \$2 million.

Although this might seem like a reasonable amount of work to be done in this area, it should be put into perspective.

MetRail is responsible for the inspection, design, construction and maintenance of approximately 400 bridges or subways. Nearly 50 per cent of them are between

65 and 130 years old and consequently, are required to carry loads far in excess of what they were originally designed for.

It is estimated that it would cost around \$1300 million to replace all structures (bridges, tunnels and subways) under the control of MetRail. While some of these structures will not need to be replaced for some years, other older structures are already requiring attention. The fact that this attention can't be given immediately to all relevant structures, is of concern to David Chamberlain, Structural Design Engineer for MetRail.

"While all the money that has gone into the upgrading of rolling stock is to be applauded, I feel there is a need to identify and concentrate on the areas of greatest need. It's not just a matter of another department moaning for more money.

"A lot of our bridges are affected by corrosion and impact by high traffic flow. As a result, they need to be replaced to make them safe and fully operational. But we haven't replaced all the bridges we have worked on, we have merely upgraded them or taken precautionary measures like placing load limits on road bridges. To completely replace all the bridges which desirably should be replaced in the near future, it would cost around \$350 million. We are currently spending \$4 million a year on our bridge upgrading program and the long-term effect is presently under review."

"By comparison, the RCA is spending over \$6 million per year on replacement of bridge structures on secondary roads. These bridges are not as old and less value compared with those within MetRail. In addition the RCA spends \$30 to \$40 million a year on major highway work involving the upgrading and widening of old bridges and the construction of new ones."

While David's comments may alarm some people, it should be emphasised that the safety of those using bridges under the control of MetRail is always given the highest priority and it should not be wrongly assumed that the safety of the structures is at risk.

Despite what some see as a shortfall in funding for bridge maintenance, there is still



A Flinders Street bound train passes part of the structure which will form a new bridge at Brown Street, Heidelberg.

plenty of work going on around the network. In fact, work has been allocated for almost every weekend for the next 12 months.

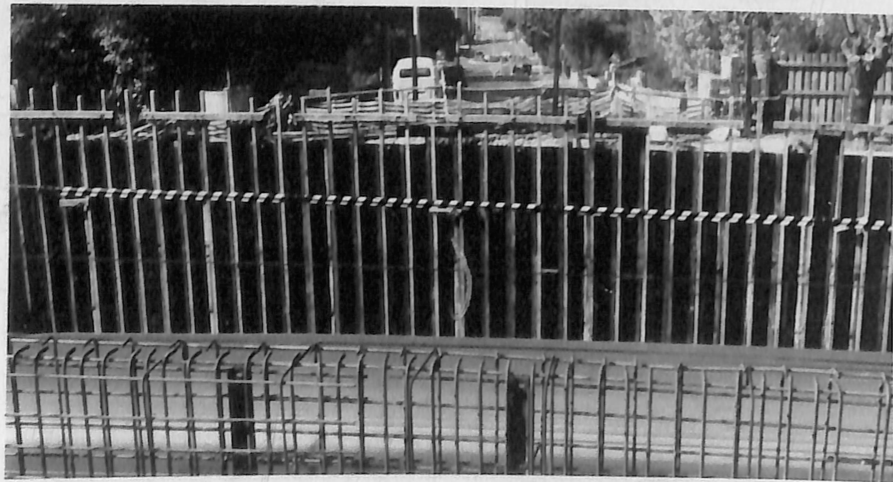
In the case of rail bridges there is a need to establish a work schedule which does not interfere with the running of services. This usually means that work gangs are only able to work from 10 am to 3 pm (off peak hours) which can restrict progress. Work at weekends, when a line can be shut and trains replaced by buses, helps to keep work on schedule.

Maintenance of road bridges provides an enormous logistics problem, quite apart from the construction work. "We notify practically everyone when we close a road for a certain time to do work on a bridge. This includes local authorities, police, ambulance, SES, fire brigades etc. We also place public notices in the local paper and do a letter box drop to residents in the area", explains David.

The fact that MetRail is responsible for some road bridges as well as rail bridges can be traced back to the early days of the railways. As the rail line was built, it cut through existing roadways, so it was determined that the railways was legally responsible to maintain the bridges, even if they were constructed to carry road traffic over rail lines.

In addition to major reconstruction work, a limited amount of maintenance repair work is being carried out. For example, at Merri Creek Bridge, Clifton Hill the old wooden decking of the bridge is beginning to rot and so plans have been developed to replace the existing decking with a modern galvanised steel deck. Total cost of this project is \$80,000.

The program for reconstruction of bridges in the metropolitan area is dependent on the availability of capital funds having regard to other major projects being undertaken at the same time and the Government's priorities and objectives.



Another view of work being carried out on a road bridge in Heidelberg. There are around 400 bridges and subways under the control of MetRail's Civil Construction Department.

## More Safety Zones for Tram Network

At about the time the electric tram was introduced to Melbourne's streets, the tram network was beginning to fan out over a wider area taking in more routes.

By the late 1920s and early 1930s the number of electric vehicles had risen dramatically as had the number of routes they served and already the cable tram was being phased out.

As the tram network was growing, developments were taking place in other areas of transport. Put simply, there was now more traffic on the roads. And the impact on tram services became more obvious. Traffic jams began to affect scheduled services and put the lives of passengers adjoining or disembarking from trams, at risk.

It became obvious that there was a need to highlight tram stops and/or passenger termini which had become inconspicuous points along open roadways. Intending passengers moving to the centre of the road from the sidewalk, in order to catch a tram, had to remain at track side with traffic of all descriptions whizzing by. Clearly safety was at risk. And so the tram safety zone was born.

Tram safety zones had, putting it mildly, very humble beginnings. In the 1930s the Melbourne City Council, deciding that its citizens should be protected at tram stops, provided temporary safety zones. These were in the form of portable posts and signs which could be



One of the new Safety Zones which are becoming more popular.

rolled out to tram stops in the morning and rolled back into storage at night. However, these were only provided at peak travelling times at certain city stops, and even then, on an irregular basis. Clearly there was a need for a more permanent arrangement.

Concrete blocks about 3 foot square were made and set at tram stops and the area where passengers could wait for trams was marked with a white line. Unfortunately this wasn't an ideal solution either, as the block impeded traffic flow and was unsuitable for the passage of trams also.

In the 1950s it was decided that the M & MTB should take over the responsibility of providing facilities for intending tram passengers along its routes and safety zone installation

formed part of this overall program. Originally white line markings and railings at some stops constituted a safety zone and while these proved fairly satisfactory, developments were required to cater for the increasing tram and road traffic flow.

In December 1954, probably the most important development in tram safety zones took place when the prow type zone was installed at selected sites in the city centre.

The prow safety zone consists of the familiar yellow concrete block which is called the prow, so named because it resembles the bow of a ship, and tubular steel railing. A white line was retained to mark the area designated as a safety zone. A sight slot above the prow which allows passengers to see oncoming trams, was added at a later date.

Reaction to the new safety zone was initially mixed but it soon became obvious that the flow of tram and road traffic was markedly improved and the safety of intending tram passengers protected.

The prow safety zone has remained the most acceptable model until the present day with a few modifications.

In 1962 a new type of safety zone was installed on a trial basis at the corners of Flinders and Russell Streets and Bourke and Russell Streets. The basic design was similar except that the new 'hairpin' design featured floodlighting to illuminate the sign. However the trial was not a success as it was found the floodlighting caused problems to oncoming car drivers.



A view of the older style of safety zones which features the distinctive tubular steel railing.



## Gordon says goodbye

When Gordon Goode first joined the railways in Victoria, he intended to stay for no longer than six months. The job was to be merely an interim measure. Twenty five years later he still contemplates what might have been.

Gordon, who recently retired from the position of Shift Stationmaster at Flinders Street, says there was just something about the job and the railway environment that made him stay on.

"Following a stint in the Army I worked for a while with the railways in New South Wales and then when I came to Melbourne it seemed appropriate to join the railways down here. I was only intending to stay for a short time before moving back to Western Australia. But the railways gets in your blood, so I stayed on."

Initially Gordon joined Richmond Station as a Station Assistant but soon found that the job offered the opportunity to travel around the State to various rail locations.

"I moved around quite a bit in the early days doing a number of different jobs at various places — from Yard Assistant at Tallarook to Assistant Stationmaster at Warrnambool. I was at Warrnambool for three years and enjoyed that position immensely and that was the step to becoming a Stationmaster."

At that time Gordon probably wondered why suddenly he was aiming at becoming a fully qualified Stationmaster instead of basking in the Perth sun as he had planned.

"I remember when I was at Footscray in the early days, the Stationmaster there once said to me — 'son, there are a lot of opportunities in the railways and if you study hard enough, one day you could become a Stationmaster'. That advice probably went unnoticed at the time but later I realised how true his comments were."

Following his time at Warrnambool, Gordon became a fully qualified Stationmaster and joined the team of relieving staff. After a few short-term appointments around the suburban network, Gordon became permanent Shift Stationmaster at Flinders Street in October 1978.

Flinders Street, by its very location and nature, provides an array of situations to be dealt with by staff. But Gordon says the biggest and best thing to happen to the station complex in his time is the redevelopment program.

"There's no doubt that the redevelopment offers commuters and employees far better facilities and the station looks a lot better than it did too. The Stationmaster's Office at Flinders Street has a lot of contact with the project co-ordinators and attend regular meetings with the builders in order to

establish the best way of overcoming problems for passengers while still allowing construction to proceed. During the busiest times of construction we also had to alter train scheduling when some platforms were closed. Although this may have been inconvenient at the time, passengers are starting to see the real benefits now."

Other situations present staff at Flinders Street with a busy schedule. When things go wrong in the system, staff are often the first line of attack for passengers. But, Gordon says, staff learn that that is all part of the job.

There are about 100 full time staff members working shifts at Flinders Street and Gordon says it can be seen as something off a trainee station. Newcomers to the job are often posted to Flinders Street first to give them an appreciation of how to deal with a large number of passengers and a variety of situations.

Undoubtedly much has changed in the railways since Gordon first joined and for the most part he sees the changes as good for the system.

"Nowadays staff are more involved with the public and there is a greater emphasis on public relations. The position of Stationmaster has also changed quite a bit. In the old days he was seen as a rather aloof, stern figure. Nowadays we tend to develop the concept of employee relations and the result is very much of a team spirit. I think staff find Stationmasters far more approachable today and Stationmasters are finding they are more involved in staff counselling as a result — but this is a good development."

Gordon is optimistic about the future of the railways and its employees. "There's still a career to be had in the railways. It is

becoming more of a young person's area but that's not necessarily a bad thing in itself", says Gordon.

"But of course if the rail system is going to remain viable, there will have to be changes in some areas. Generally the training processes which emphasise communication and customer relations will help to create a better system. It has certainly worked at Flinders Street where the team spirit is most pleasing.

"Despite what people might say, today's rail system is far better than that of, say, five years ago. It's just that people forget all the problems we used to have and overlook that we have now started to iron out most of the bugs."

Gordon says he will miss the people at Flinders Street most. "I think rail employees are a special breed and there is a lot of comradeship between MetRail personnel. Our staff do have to put up with a lot of criticism but usually they come through it smiling and work very much as a team."

And the thing Gordon will miss most about the job? "Getting up early in the morning". His shifts alternate between 6 am to 3 pm and 3 pm to 11 pm.

Gordon will be kept busy in retirement. He plans a trip back to his native UK in July and intends to travel around Australia at leisure later. One of his other great loves — photography — will no doubt keep him busy on his travels.

When Gordon Goode hung up his Stationmaster's hat for the last time late one Saturday night recently, he must have had mixed feelings. Certainly he has no regrets in extending that six month stay with the railways and the many employees to have worked with him over the years are glad he had a change of heart too.



Gordon Goode, Shift Stationmaster at Flinders Street, reflects on his 25 years service to the rail system — or is he thinking of his well deserved retirement?

## New look for Preston Workshops

The fact that we are soon to see more of the distinctive LRVs or articulated trams on the road, is going to effect a large section of our workforce in the Tram and Bus section. But probably no area is going to be more effected than the Preston Workshops.

Although built by Comeng at its Dandenong plant, the LRVs are finished out at the workshops and of course when in full service, are periodically returned to Preston for routine maintenance.

To cope with the extended workload and particularly because the vehicles concerned are longer than any previously used in the network, there are to be some major alterations to the workshops which have served Melbourne's tram system for many years.

Work first began on the construction of the workshops on a 17 acre site back in 1925. The planned complex was one of the largest servicing outlets of its kind and included facilities to deal with car erecting, paint requirements, wheel maintenance, electrical processes, foundry and pattern shop needs, storage and traverses to transport the trams, amongst other things.

The buildings were completed in 1926 and have since been the virtual nerve centre of the tramway network. However, the extensions currently under way at Preston will provide the workshops with the facilities required to deal with the new technology.

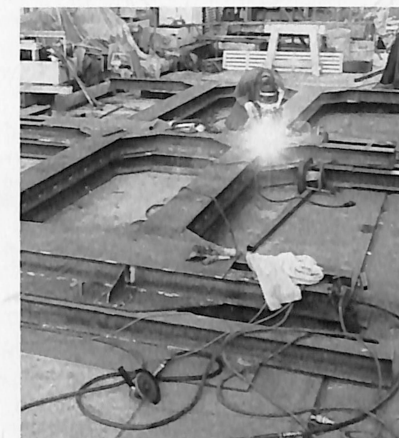
It is required that a Body Shop with clear spans greater than the length of an LRV, be built. This is being constructed to the north of the current Body Shop.

A great deal of other work will be carried out as part of the redevelopment of the workshops. This will include the laying of two additional storage tracks, the construction of two longer traversers and the associated traverser pits, minor extensions to the sheet metal workshop, and the construction of a new LRV unloading bay. The latter is required as Comeng are to deliver the LRVs from their Dandenong plant on the back of a low loader and they will be run direct from the loader on to the Preston Workshop tracks.

To accommodate the new Body Shop, land previously used for car parking is required.

Therefore construction of new car parking facilities was also added to the list of work to be done as part of the redevelopment program.

Some of the land previously used for car parking at Preston has quite an interesting history. Land opposite the workshops and bounded by St. Georges Road and Miller and Watt Streets was originally the site of a brickworks quarry. Later it was taken over by the Northcote Council which entered into an agreement with the Workshops to provide parking facilities. The Workshops built the car park and was able to use it during the week. But during the weekend the car park was open



Welding a section of frame to be used in the construction of one of the new buildings planned for the Workshop redevelopment



Work being carried out on a tunnel under the rail line will provide access to new parking areas.

to the general public.

Last year, the Council gave the land to the Aboriginal Advancement League who have created an attractive parkland setting. However, in so doing, the car park facilities at the Workshops were lost.

Other car parking areas at the Workshop site then became more congested and with the building program taking up an area currently used for parking, there was a need to extend facilities towards the east of the Workshop site.

The new car park will include an area across the rail line which runs in close proximity to the Workshop. To enable easy

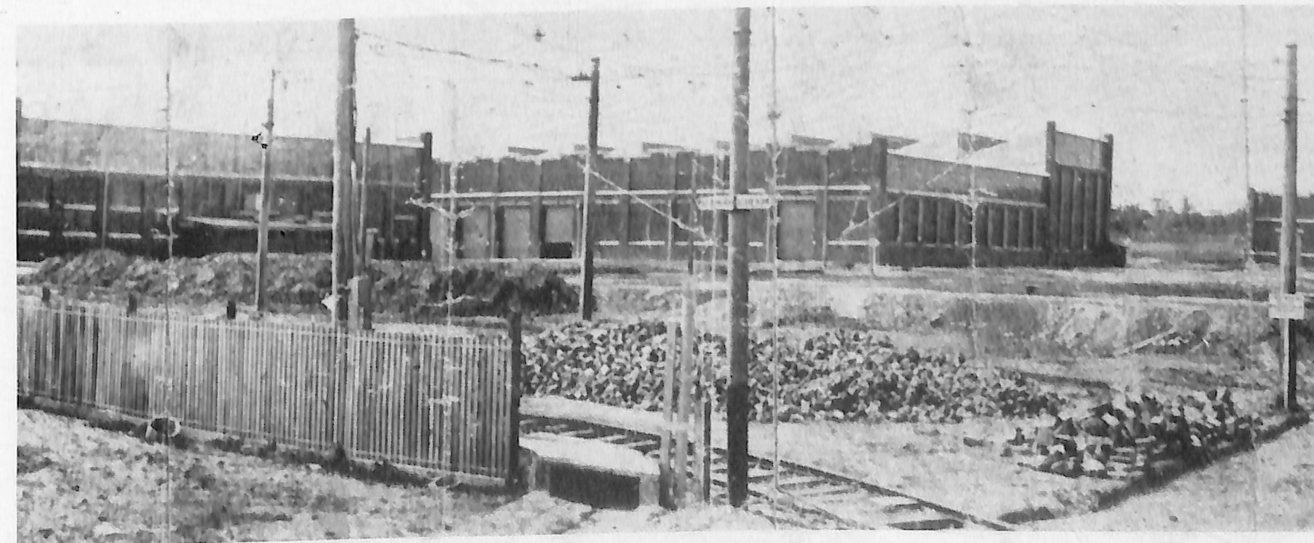
access to this area, a tunnel under the line is being constructed as part of the overall project.

As part of the car parking arrangements, closed circuit TV monitoring is proposed to ensure the security of vehicles in the new car parking area which is out of sight of the workshops.

Operation of the monitoring system will be from a guard house fitted out with a comprehensive control panel. The system will allow 24 hour inspection of all car parking areas at the Workshops. This section of the project will cost around \$250,000 which, over the years would prove to be far less expensive than the number of round-the-clock security personnel required to provide a similar service.

Total cost of the redevelopment program at Preston will be around \$8 million. Work is currently under way on construction and the completion of the first stage is expected by the end of the year. Most of the work will be finished by the middle of next year.

The current developments at Preston are the most significant since the Workshops were first built. It is a good indication of the way the Met is moving and the action being taken in relevant areas to keep pace with the changing face of Melbourne's transport industry.



Preston Workshops pictured during the initial construction period in 1925-26. The Workshops are currently experiencing a major face-lift.

## Shelters provide greater passenger comfort

Melbourne's tram and bus network has grown considerably since the early days of operations and today tram routes cover 223 kilometres and Government buses cover over 50 routes which includes an extensive part of the city and suburbs.

With the expansion of the network has come a need to provide new and improved passenger facilities. As a result, more passenger shelters for tram and bus are being constructed.

In the early days of tram operations, local authorities which were responsible for the services, provided a few shelters at the busiest stops. Some quickly fell into disrepair and were replaced by a more modern design, while others have been restored and still serve as tram shelters at various locations. They have become landmarks in the local areas in which they are located. Some have been classified by the National Trust.

When the M&MTB took over the operation of Melbourne's trams for the various councils in 1920, it established a program of greater co-ordination which meant improved design continuity and a fairer distribution of shelters to the various areas of the network.

In 1929 one of the first 'new design' shelters was erected at the corner of Swanston and Victoria

Streets and others followed at a number of city locations.

The depression of the 1930s led to cost cutting measures on several fronts and the construction and erection of passenger shelters was one area to suffer.

However, following the Second World War the construction of shelters became a priority in the Tram and Bus Division and more shelters began to appear on new and extended routes. Initially timber framed shelters were used during the early to mid 1940s and towards the end of that decade a new design featuring steel framing and glass windows, was introduced.

In the late 1950s with the spread of suburbia and extensions to tram and bus routes, the M&MTB began to be inundated with requests for additional shelters by the municipalities which were springing up at a rapid rate.

Operating costs remained a major concern and it would have been financially impossible to meet all requests for new shelters. To overcome this problem and being keen to provide the best possible facilities to customers, the M&MTB entered into an agreement with various local authorities whereby the cost of construction and erection of shelters was jointly shared by the Board and the Municipality



*The 'single' modular shelter which is becoming a more common sight around Melbourne. This model was first installed in 1979.*

concerned.

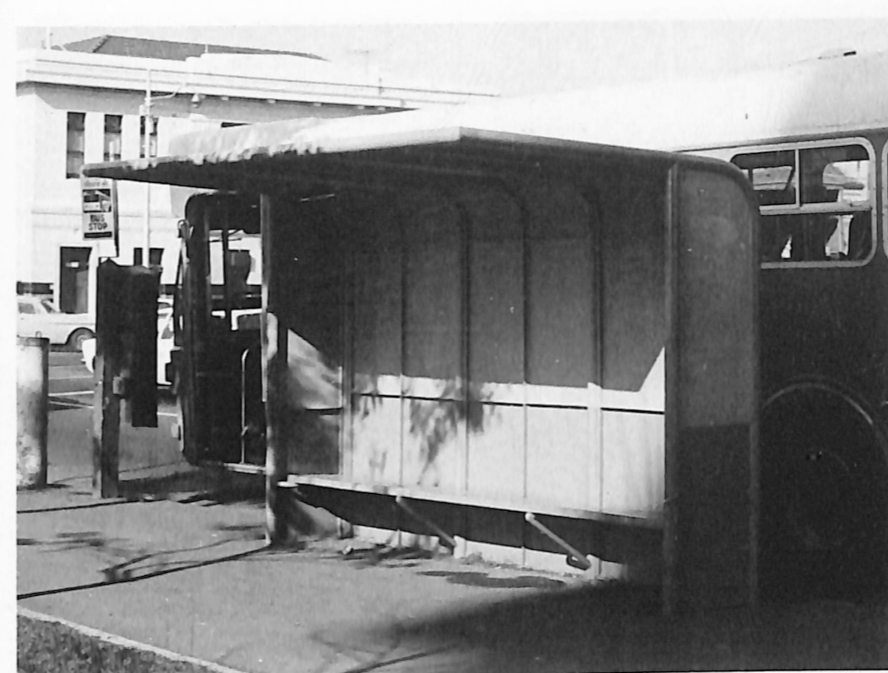
The practice of sharing the cost of shelters continued throughout the 1960s and into the early 1970s. During this time, work was carried out on new designs created to improve passenger comfort and provide service information. The most popular design was the modular steel framed shelter with glass windows. It was divided to provide seating in one section and standing room in the adjoining section. Route and service information was displayed on the windows. Later in the 1970s this information was displayed on a compact board attached to tram and bus stop poles, a method which is still used today.

By 1976, 50 of the new steel and glass shelters had been erected but the funding of construction and erection had changed. The joint arrangement between the Board and relevant municipalities was abandoned and the cost was funded through the Transport Fund (Government subsidy). The 1970s were also a time when a lot of upgrading work was done to existing shelters. Up to 150 shelters could be repainted in a single year and minor repairs were also carried out to counteract the growing wave of vandalism.

In 1979 a number of shelters half the size of the normal shelter, were installed. These were almost identical to the other model except



*The steel framed 'double' modular shelter which was first developed in the late 1960s.*



*One of the older wooden shelters which still serve a number of bus routes.*

that they only consisted of the section containing the seating.

As the number of tram safety zones in the network grew, consideration was given to the development of a new streamlined model of shelter which could be easily erected at safety zone locations. In 1981 the first three special shelters were erected and are now becoming a more common sight. Because of space restrictions at zone locations, these shelters are narrower and taller than the more conventional shelter.

Further developments, particularly in the area of integration between the various transport modes, has seen the evolution of larger and more modern passenger facilities. The interchange shelter at the corner of Flinders and Elizabeth Streets, completed in 1982, is just one example of this.

Since the MTA was formed in 1983, the concept developed for shelters in the 1970s has largely been retained but the Authority has accepted total responsibility for providing passenger facilities.

When locations in need of shelters have been identified, the local council is advised of the Authority's intention to erect shelters and liaison between the two organisations can establish the best location for shelters in order to serve the local population. In addition, requests are

still received from local municipalities for additional shelters and these requests are considered in the light of the current works program.

About 30 shelters are constructed each year at the Preston Workshops. Once built, the shelters become the responsibility of the Tram and Bus Civil Engineering Branch which co-ordinates the erection at chosen sites.

A budget of \$2 million has been established to cater for the MTA's



*One of the first tram shelters erected by local authorities. These are maintained by the MTA's Civil Engineering Branch.*

ongoing program of shelter installation. Each shelter costs around \$5,500 to manufacture and install.

Most of the installation is carried out during a one month period and recently the Civil Engineering Branch completed the installation of more shelters around the network. All were of the single modular design. In addition, the maintenance of existing shelters, many of which have become the centre of attention for vandals, is also carried out on an ongoing basis.

The erection of more passenger shelters on tram and bus routes forms part of the MTA's overall policy of upgrading facilities for our customers and judging by the reaction of passengers, the new facilities are very welcome. Take for example this letter which was first printed in the September 1985 issue of Met Lines:

Dear Sir,

I am writing to thank you for the excellent new seat and shelter you have provided at stop 8, route 3.

Many of the older people like me will find it a great comfort in any weather, hot, wet or windy.

Yours Gratefully  
JEAN WALTERS  
East Malvern.

The writer says it all and no doubt echoes the sentiments of many other passengers who basically take the shelters for granted.

## A railway stalwart retires

The railways can sometimes be described as a family affair — it becomes a life time involvement for many members of one family — almost an obsession and the tradition of working for the railways continues through the generations. Youngsters with a railway background don't have to think twice before choosing a career.

Such was the case with Bill Callahan who recently retired after 34 years service to Victoria's rail system.

"It seems that railways had always been in the Callahan family. I had a number of relations who had worked in the railways and it always appealed as a good life to me. I joined in 1952 as an Adult Porter at Flinders Street Station.

"There was a lot of support from supervisory staff in those days and you learnt aspects of the job as you went along. There was never a case as there is now of putting people into various sections more rapidly. We were taken along quietly to ensure we had a thorough understanding of all tasks we took on. Training and supervision was a large part of the early days of a job in the railways but in those days we were closer to full staffing."

Those were the days of the 'dreaded' broken shift and Bill often had to work from 7am to 10am, take a break and then return at 1.30pm and work through the peak period. During night shifts, one of the many activities involved was loading the overnight paper trains. How times have changed.

Also at about this time Bill extended his expertise to tracks of a different kind. The Victorian Railways were still running railway trams to St. Kilda and Brighton and Bill served as a conductor on these trams for about six months. He still retains his tram conductor's certificate.

Bill obviously took to the railway life like a duck to water. Immediately he was employed, he began working to improve his position by studying for his Safeworking Certificate and Assistant Stationmasters brief. In only five months he had passed his exams and so started a long and eventful career.

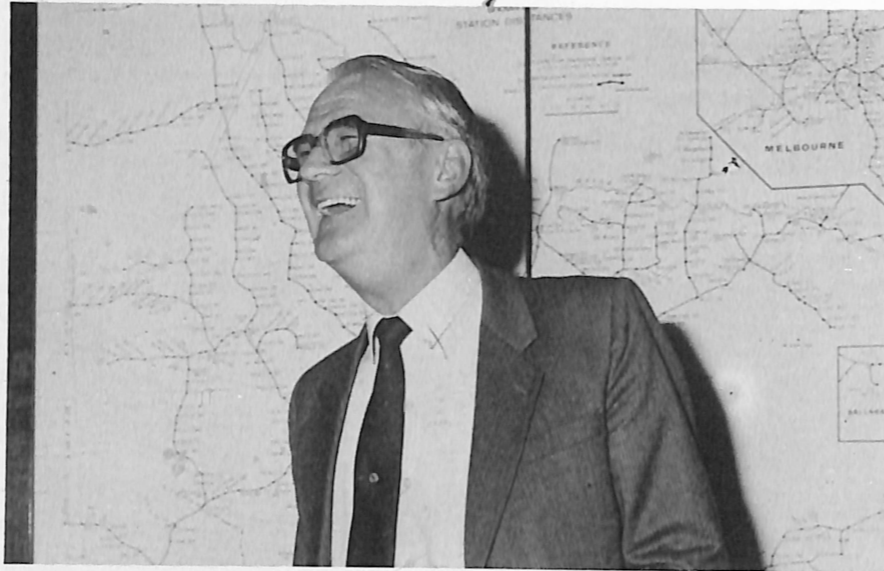
From Flinders Street, Bill moved to Corio where he was appointed Assistant Stationmaster. He remembers with a distinct sense of pride that he shunted the first train into the then new Shell oil refinery, which is adjacent to the rail lines at Corio. Bill says he used to have to deal with about 20 trains in an eight hour shift.

Appointments to other stations around the State followed and while at one, Murtoa, Bill sat for his Stationmasters examination and in 1959 he was assigned to his first location as a fully qualified Stationmaster — Brim.

Bill spent eight years at Brim where he gained further valuable experience of a Stationmaster's duties and the handling of diverse cargoes.

No doubt the good work being done by Brim's Stationmaster caught the eye of 'Head Office' and Bill was invited to take on the job of Traffic Inspector. He accepted the offer and early in 1968 found himself at Seymour in that position. Later in the year he was assigned to Flinders Street as Traffic Inspector there. The change in positions was taken in his stride but as Bill explains, there was also a need to change the responsibilities he had been used to.

"My immediate task was to supervise



Bill Callahan recalls a lighter moment of his career with the railways at a recent presentation to mark his retirement.

Stationmasters and that could have led to some major problems in staff relations. After all, here was a former Stationmaster, one of their colleagues, now telling other Stationmasters what to do.

"But in fact it was not as difficult to establish co-operation as might have been imagined. It was just a matter of talking to Stationmasters on a reciprocal level every time you were inspecting operations. They soon learnt that you weren't in the business of undermining their authority."

Bill says the position of Traffic Inspector provided him with his greatest challenge, particularly during his time at Seymour, but it was a challenge he firmly accepted.

In 1970, Bill was promoted to Personal Traffic Inspector to the Chief Traffic Manager at Spencer Street, a position he filled for only a brief time before moving to the Dynon Goods Yard as Assistant Goods Superintendent.

But, as they say, you can't keep a good man down and only a short time later he returned to Spencer Street as Special Officer to the Chief Traffic Officer. This position entailed a diverse range of activities including liaison with local authorities to ensure livestock yards adjoining rail lines were used most effectively.

A year later, Bill was again promoted, this time to Relieving District Supervisor, a position which was responsible for six country districts as well as metropolitan operations.

"I found my two and a half years in this area very enjoyable," recalls Bill. "I was able to get around to all divisions and gain a greater appreciation of rail operations in my area. Things were really starting to change in those days and there were some challenging decisions to be made."

By 1977 the rationalisation of the Victorian rail system was already under way and it was clear that even greater changes would follow in the 1980s. By this time Bill had become Assistant Chief Operations Manager (Personnel) and later, Regional Operations Manager, a position he held until his retirement.

Bill recalls that during the early 1980s Victoria's rail system changed dramatically

and although some have misgivings about the changes, Bill believes they were for the better.

"At around the time MetRail was formed we were experiencing an influx of high technology which changed the face of the railways forever. I see the formation of MetRail as a good thing. I think that

because of the vast changes that had taken place, there was a need for a separate metropolitan rail system. There was a need to specialise and I feel it was good strategy to cut up the rail operations as the MTA did. Although there have been obvious problems, I think that when performing at its best, the MetRail service is far better than the service provided previously."

As Regional Operations Manager, Bill had seven managers reporting to him and counts himself lucky that he had a good team to work with who co-operated and responded so well. But then of course the team is only as good as the leader.

However, Bill is certain that he couldn't have achieved half of what he did in his last position without the support and assistance of his Secretary, Patricia Blencowe. 'I simply would have been lost without her,' says Bill.

Bill counts his time as Relieving District Supervisor as his most satisfying in the railways because of the autonomy of the position. But he is concerned about the increasing pressures on senior managers over recent times. Yet despite this he says quite confidently; 'I wouldn't do other than I did if I had my time over.'

Bill says he will be kept busy in retirement. He is a keen golfer and fly fisherman and an enthusiastic amateur photographer. Research into his family's history will also keep him busy and with a little time left over, he plans to travel with his wife around Australia.

We wish Bill all the best in retirement but lament his departure as people with his expertise, knowledge and commitment aren't easy to find. He can be proud though that his valuable contribution to the State's railways extends and enriches the Callahan family tradition.

## Painted trams ride the tracks again

More of Melbourne's painted trams will soon be riding the tracks under a self funding program announced by the State Government recently.

The first artist to take brush to tram will be cartoonist Michael Leunig who has promised Melburnians his own vision of the Garden of Eden, set in Melbourne's suburbs. His tram will be jointly sponsored by the Ministry for the Arts and the Ministry of Transport.

Transport Minister, Tom Roper and Arts Minister, Race Matthews, launched the joint Ministry program at Wattle Park early last month.

Twenty trams will be painted under the program over a three year period, the first appearing on the tracks during this month.

The paintings will be paid for by sponsors, eight of whom have already committed themselves to the program following media announcements of the new Painted Tram Program.

As an extension to this, newspaper advertisements will be placed in the near future calling for additional sponsors of the painted trams.

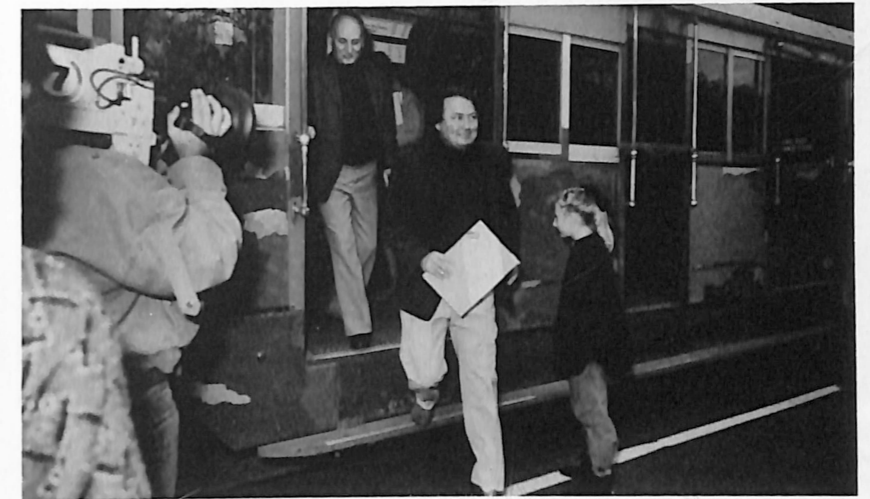
The organisations already involved in the Painted Tram Program are Associated Communications, Victorian Arts Centre, Carlton and United Breweries, State Insurance Office, Focus Group, Herald and Weekly Times, Norwich Winterthur Insurance (Australia) and Eon-FM.

The basic \$30,000 sponsorship fee will be paid to the MTA to cover the cost of refurbishing, painting and maintaining the trams in good order over a 10 year period. This represents a significant cost saving in maintenance to the MTA. The sponsor's name will appear on a plaque inside the tram, and on the tram's flag.

For an additional \$30,000 the sponsor may have exclusive advertising rights to panels inside the tram for the ten year life of the sponsorship. This amount will be paid into a Painted Tram Fund which will pay the artists and produce documentary and visual material such as books, videos, posters and prints about the program.

The new scheme follows the first successful painted tram program which included works by Clifton Pugh, Mirka Mora, Don Laycock and other famous Australian artists.

These trams have been widely featured in Australia and overseas and some passengers even prefer to miss an ordinary



Transport Minister, Tom Roper, arrives on one of the old painted trams ready to launch the new series.

tram to take a ride on a painted tram.

The existing painted trams are nearing the end of their useful life and plans have been developed to auction them as works of art with the proceeds also going to the Painted Tram Fund.

The Clifton Pugh tram, one of the most popular trams presently on the tracks will be donated by the two Ministers to the Museum of Victoria. The remainder of the 14 trams will be auctioned towards the end of this year.

Prior to the auction there will be an extensive publicity and information program in Australia and world wide. Overseas museums and galleries will be informed of the auction and invited to bid for these original Australian works of art.

Overseas cities and organisations with tram systems or operating tram museums (many of which already have a Melbourne tram) will also be advised as they may wish to purchase a painted tram in working condition. These include Boston, Seattle and systems in Oregon and Iowa.

Australian companies may wish to purchase a tram to keep or donate to a gallery. There are also many Victorians and Australians who have contacted the MTA about purchasing a tram.

A brochure detailing each tram will be produced and all the painted trams will be

gathered together for a special exhibition and display in the next few months, before the auction.

As part of the overall painted trams program, Victorian school students have been invited to submit designs for a tram with the theme of peace to mark International Year of Peace.

All primary and secondary schools have been asked to participate in the program to find a suitable design depicting the meaning of peace.

The involvement of students at all levels is an ideal way of obtaining the views of the next generation. Teachers will be encouraged to include the activity in the art curriculum as a group effort.

One design will be selected to be painted on a tram during the 1986 August school holidays and the students will be invited to participate in the painting of the tram.

A number of designs including the actual tram design, will be featured in this year's transport display at the Royal Melbourne Show. Students will be invited to paint their design on a simulated tram in the Government Pavilion.

A special committee, comprising representatives of the Ministry for the Arts, Ministry of Transport, International year of Peace and the Aesthetics Advisory Committee of the Ministry for the Arts will be set up to assess designs.

Artists chosen to paint trams in the latest program must have demonstrated an ability to work on a large scale and to have made a contribution to the development of contemporary art, particularly in Melbourne.

The designs need to have a sense of freshness about them, but also if possible, reflect major trends in recent art history.

The Aesthetics Advisory Committee of the Ministry for the Arts has already accepted designs from three well known artists — Michael Leunig, David Larwill and Robert Jacks.

Approaches have been made to a further eight artists and following consideration of their designs by the Aesthetics Committee, designs will be included into the Painted Tram Program.



Transport Minister, Tom Roper (foreground) and Arts Minister, Race Matthews try their hand at 'tram art' during the promotion to launch the new series of painted trams.

## Garden competition update



Stationmaster, Jack Rudder pictured with one of the many garden plots at Surrey Hills Station. The work at this station is a good example to other entrants in the MetRail Garden Competition, of what can be achieved in upgrading the station environment.

In the May issue of Met Lines we announced that MetRail would be holding a garden competition for stations and depots during this year.

Since the initial announcement, entries have closed and assessments of the relevant areas will begin this month.

Competitions similar to the one organised for this year were held on a regular basis for many years during the 1950s, 60s and 70s. However these were State wide competitions and usually suburban stations ran a poor second to their country cousins for a number of reasons.

After the rationalization of the railway system and the formation of MetRail, a little time elapsed before operations settled down and the subject of garden competitions was raised again. This year sees the emergence of the competition but on a far grander scale than its predecessors.

This year's competition is run under the control of Bruce Evans, MetRail's Environmental Officer. Bruce manages a full time staff of up to 12 men who are responsible for giving our stations and depots a lift. Often the workload can be shared by small contractors or local councils or community groups keen to see their station looking good.

Despite the activities of the environmental team, the garden competition is designed to get employees involved in their environment — the one in which they have to work. It is hoped

that by doing this employees will take pride in the appearance of their work place which will have long-term benefits for us all. And while the work carried out by the environmental team in tending established plants is valuable, with so many stations to be covered, it is not possible to give the added attention which would make stations that little bit more presentable. However, day by day tending of planted areas would fulfil this need.

Of course some station and depot personnel have already taken the initiative without the incentive of a competition. Surrey Hills is an excellent example of what can be done with a little bit of work and dedication.

Stationmaster at Surrey Hills, Jack Rudder, has been tending gardens, including flowerboxes, around the station for a number of years, much to the delight of commuters using the station. Such initiatives also lead to a spirit of close co-operation with the local community.

A few years ago, vandals attacked the station and uprooted all plants in the flower boxes around the station. Jack and his staff were naturally devastated but the local community banded together in a rare show of support and came up with the necessary funds to replace the destroyed plants. This is just one example of how a positive move by Met employees can be met with an equally positive response from commuters.

Despite the above story vandalism is a

surprisingly minor problem in the area of plants and shrubbery. Bruce Evans says that apart from one small area where tree saplings were destroyed, generally vandals steer clear of plant life, for what reasons remains obscure, but we can be thankful they do.

The response to this year's competition is regarded as reasonable considering that the event did not attract a lot of publicity and that it is the first year of the upgraded contest. Nevertheless, a number of stations and depots from a wide area of the network have entered.

Some may think that with the head-start it has, Surrey Hills would be a 'natural' to take out the station title. But as Bruce Evans explains, the judging emphasises effort.

"We will be making a number of visits to the relevant areas over the next few months and we will be looking at the amount of effort put in over a period of time. There are a number of variables to be considered in the judging, such as the amount of labour available and involved, the amount of new work to be carried out, maintenance of any existing areas, design and neatness.

"The fact that assessments will be carried out periodically, overcomes the situation of some area putting in a spurt of enthusiasm just before judging time. The overall effort will be taken into account during the judging."

With the onslaught of winter, one may wonder how difficult it would be to get enthusiastic about gardening when many plants stubbornly refuse to grow. But according to Bruce Evans, that doesn't cause much of a problem.

"Despite the onset of winter, areas can start establishing new sections of planting and make moves to improve the appearance of existing garden areas generally. Winter is often a time for garden maintenance and this will also be taken into account during judging."

During this year the Keep Australia Beautiful campaign will again be running its Tidy Town competition and many suburban stations in areas chosen to take part in this competition, have the opportunity to play a part in establishing a more environmental pleasing community.

Assessments of entries in this year's garden competition will soon commence and final judging is expected in November. We wish all contestants good luck and although not everyone can win the competition, they can certainly win points with commuters — and that, in the final analysis, is what the contest is all about. Further updates will be published in coming issues of Met Lines.

## Federal funding boost for trams

More than \$24 million is being provided by the Federal Government to buy new trams for Melbourne's public transport system.

This is an increase of more than \$11 million on the original amount approved for the purchase of trams in 1985/86.

Announcing details of the increase recently, the Federal Transport Minister, Peter Morris, said the funds, which will buy about 30 new A class trams, would give Melbourne's public transport system a real boost.

"We hope to achieve two things with

this injection of funds,' Mr. Morris said. 'Firstly the new trams will greatly improve the system's efficiency, particularly at peak times, and secondly, we hope the new trams will encourage more people to leave their cars at home and use public transport.'

Federal funding granted as part of the Australian Bicentennial program has already enabled the MTA to purchase a number of new A class trams and some of these vehicles bear a plaque acknowledging this fact.

The introduction of more modern trams extends the Met's transport

network and brings us a step closer to having the most modern and efficient transport network in Australia.

Other MTA projects to receive Federal funding are the Bundoora tramline extension, St. Kilda/Domain Roads tram interchange, the purchase of new buses and railcar interchanges at Croydon and Mitcham Stations.

Federal funding from the Australian Bicentennial Road Development (ABRD) Program, totalling \$39 million, has now been approved for urban public transport projects in Victoria.

## Extra comfort for tram travellers



Transport Minister, Tom Roper, officially opens the new Sigma plant. Sigma is supplying air conditioning units for installation in the Met's LRVs. Also pictured are Roger Dane, Managing Director, Sigma (left) and Stan Paul, Manager Victoria, Sigma.

Melbourne's light rail vehicles will be the first vehicles serving the tram network to offer the comfort of air conditioning in summer.

Sigma Air Conditioning Pty Ltd was recently chosen as the air conditioning supplier for the Met's 130 new articulated trams which will come into service during the next few years.

Sigma, a wholly-owned Australian company, produces an extensive range of specialised air conditioning equipment for use in mining, industry, defence, railcars and locomotives. It is one of the major manufacturers of railcar air conditioning in the world.

Recently, the company moved its Victorian branch to a new and larger facility at Thornbury and Transport Minister, Tom Roper, was invited to officially open the premises.

The company has developed a high standard of design and manufacture of equipment and is a major supplier to V/Line

and MetRail,' Mr. Roper said.

'Under a \$29 million contract with MetRail, Sigma is supplying 1,140 units for the new Comeng trains.

'The design of these units was awarded the Annual Excellence Award from the Australian Institute of Refrigeration, Air Conditioning and Heating.

'The LRVs, due to begin service in Melbourne late next year, will each be fitted with two separate alternating current, roof mounted air conditioners. They will also heat the vehicle in winter,' said Mr. Roper.

The series of air conditioning units to be used on the LRVs are currently used by all Australian railway systems to air condition the passenger compartments of long distance, high speed intercity expresses, and mass transit commuter trains. This places Sigma as a world leader in this field.

The series range include Sigma's unique one piece stainless steel, fully integrated roof package, as well as roof and under floor split systems.



One of the Met's LRVs, soon to come into full service in Melbourne, fitted with the Sigma air conditioning units.

## 'Freedom of Information Act 1982'

Some readers of 'Met Lines' may be aware of the existence of the Freedom of Information Act. A few have made requests, others may find the following information of interest.

### Description

It is described simply as 'an act to give the members of the public rights of access to official documents of the Government of Victoria and of its agencies and for other purposes'. The MTA is described as an agency under the Act.

### Object Of Act

The object of this Act is to extend as far as possible the right of the community to access to information in the possession of the Government of Victoria and other bodies constituted under the law of Victoria for certain public purposes.

### How To Make An FOI Request

1. Identify the document you want and which organisation has it.
2. If you are unsure what document you want, ring the Freedom of Information Manager at

the organisation you think may have the document.

3. Make a request in writing: many organisations have special forms for this or you may just write a letter mentioning FOI.
4. You may ask to see the document; or to obtain a copy; or both to see it and obtain a copy.
5. There is likely to be a charge for this service. You may want to establish how much the charge will be before proceeding with your request.
6. You will be notified within 45 days whether your document is available. If your request for access is refused, you will be told why and also how you can appeal against the decision.
7. You will probably need to call in at the organisation's offices to see the document, or pick up a copy. The FOI Manager will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time and place for access. Inquiries and further information regarding particular FOI requests should be directed to

the FOI Manager at the Government agency concerned. The FOI Policy Branch of the Law Department will assist you with general inquiries or complaints about the legislation.

The FOI Policy Branch may be contacted at —  
The Law Department  
221 Queen Street,  
MELBOURNE 3000. Ph: 603 6777

The authorised person appointed by the MTA and approved by the Minister to make decisions in respect to requests made to this Authority is the FOI Manager, Mr. Con O'Carroll.

Con's position within the MTA is Manager Administrative Services and his duties encompass that of Manager Freedom of Information. He can be contacted by telephone on 618 3650 and his office is located on the 1st Floor, 673 Bourke Street, Melbourne.

Those seeking assistance with FOI requests, or simply wishing to know more about the Act, are asked to contact Con O'Carroll at the above address.