

# Making Melbourne marvellous

Melbourne is at a turning point. Three decades of road-oriented transport planning have created a tidal wave of traffic and a catastrophic decline of public transport.

Many of the attractive features of Melbourne - parks, historic buildings, a strong city centre, a 'public transport friendly' urban form - have survived, but are now under serious threat. The Linking Melbourne freeway explosion would destroy them, changing Melbourne into yet another polluted, sprawling, car-dominated mess like Los Angeles.

There is a better way. Melbourne can justify its 'world's most livable city' title and turn away from the failed 1950s transport model.

Our extensive public transport infrastructure and centralised travel patterns provide an opportunity rare among world cities for a painless, inexpensive transition to a sustainable, livable and more equitable city. We can even save money in the process.

Marvellous Melbourne can be truly marvellous again!

This leaflet is a summary of *Wrong Way Go Back*, a 24-page report prepared by the Public Transport Users Association. Copies are available for \$ 5.00 including postage. Order by phone on (03) 9650 7898, or send a cheque (with your name and address) to:

**Wrong Way Go Back Orders,  
PTUA,  
247 Flinders Lane,  
Melbourne, 3000.**

## You can help

The road juggernaut can be stopped. Transport policies can be turned around. The Kennett government recently reversed its plan to close the Upfield rail line following community pressure.

You can add to public pressure for a change in transport policy by:

- Writing to the Premier (Jeff Kennett), the Roads Minister (Bill Baxter) and the Opposition Leader (John Brumby) demanding better transport policies.
- Sending letters to "The Age", the "Herald-Sun" or your local paper, or phoning "Access Age" or "50/50".
- Writing to, ringing, or better still, visiting your local State MP (in the phone book under "Parliament of Victoria").
- Contact your local Federal MP (in phone book under "Commonwealth Parliamentary Offices") to say you don't support your money being used to provide Federal tax concessions for privately built freeways.
- You can use the points made in this leaflet, or the full version of *Wrong Way, Go Back* (see order details above).

## Get involved in a campaign.

You can join one of the groups campaigning for a better transport policy.

## Contact details:

**Public Transport Users Association**  
Campaigns for better transport across the State.  
**9650 7898.**

**Koonung-Mullum Forestway Association**  
Working for alternatives to the extension of the Eastern Freeway through Box Hill, Doncaster, Mitcham and Ringwood.  
**0055 39925 (35 c per minute)**

**Campaign Against Freeway Extensions (CAFE)**  
Saving the inner suburbs from freeways.  
**9419 8700**

**Warrandyte-Eltham Environmentally Sustainable Transport Association**  
Campaigning to save Eltham and Warrandyte from a six-lane ring-freeway.  
**9844 3454**

**Upgrade Upfield Coordinating Committee**  
Northern suburbs public transport issues.  
**9383 2461**

**Alternatives to Freeways Now!**  
Road issues across Melbourne.  
**9326 8245**

# WRONG WAY GO BACK

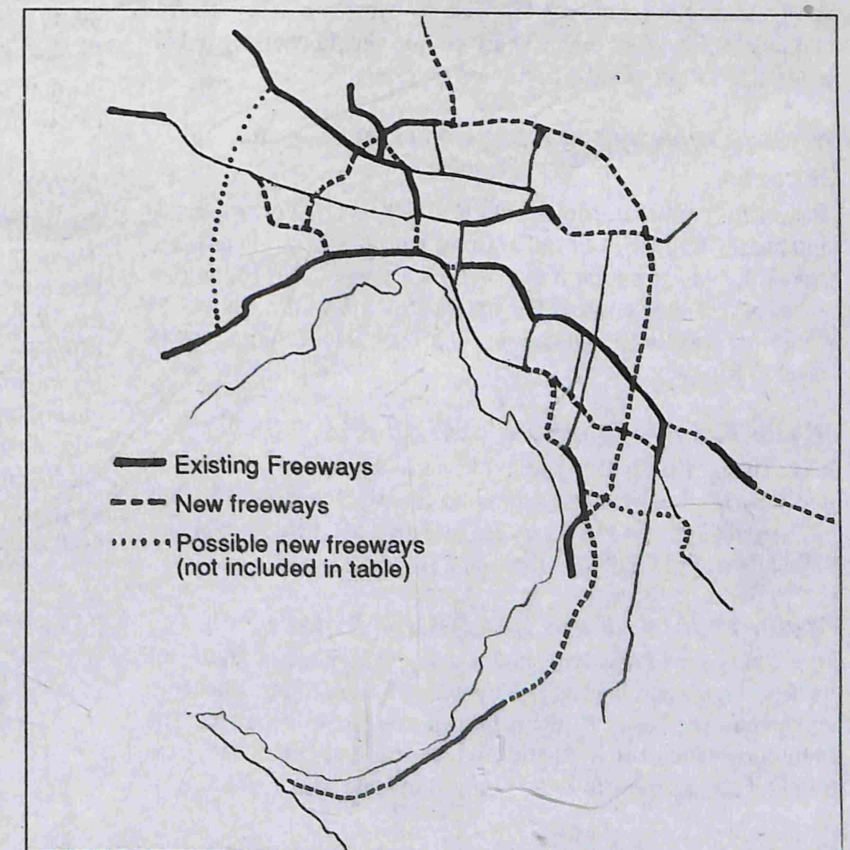
## The Alternative to Melbourne's Freeway Explosion

A freeway revolt is beginning as the world's most livable city begins to wake up to 'Linking Melbourne,' the world's biggest urban freeway programme. The government's road plan will build 211 kilometres of new freeway and widen many existing freeways, more than doubling the size of what is already Australia's biggest freeway network. The plan includes City Link (a tunnel under the Botanical Gardens, extension of the Tullamarine Freeway through North Melbourne and freeway widenings), a \$2.5 billion ring-freeway through scenic areas on Melbourne's outskirts, extension of the Eastern Freeway and many more projects.

The financial cost of Linking Melbourne is \$ 6.5 billion; the cost to the environment and quality of life still greater. Melbourne is set to become the Los Angeles of the Southern Hemisphere.

If implemented, Linking Melbourne will increase traffic levels, worsening pollution which damages health and contributes to the greenhouse effect. Communities will be divided, homes will be demolished and scenic areas destroyed to lay hundreds of kilometres of bitumen and concrete. Public transport will be undermined, setting off a downward spiral of patronage decline, service cuts and fare rises.

There are alternatives. Across the world, cities are turning to public transport for lasting solutions to traffic problems. First class public transport - with fast, frequent, integrated, safe, clean and economical services - is winning customers away from cars across Europe and North America. Even Perth and Brisbane are getting in on the act! Melbourne can join this trend to environmentally sustainable urban transport. The time to start is now.



# Ten myths from the road lobby

*There seems to be a lot of disinformation being put out about transport here in Melbourne*

- Vukan Vuchic, Professor of Transportation, University of Pennsylvania, visiting Melbourne in 1994.

## **Myth: Freeways relieve traffic congestion.**

Fact: Freeways add to traffic problems by increasing traffic volumes. The best international research (for example, the report of the British Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment, released December 1994) has found that building freeways encourages people to stop using public transport, to travel more often and make longer trips.

## **Myth: Free flowing traffic cuts pollution.**

Fact: Firstly, freeways create traffic jams, not free flowing traffic. Secondly, any improvement in 'miles per gallon' caused by freeways is swamped by the additional miles of travel freeways also cause.

## **Myth: Freeways are bypass roads.**

Fact: Melbourne's freeways are mainly for central city commuters. Census figures show that of the 252,000 workers entering the central city from the South-Eastern, Tullamarine and Westgate corridors, only 7.4% wish to bypass the City; the remaining 92.6% work there. These people should be using public transport, if it provided a first-class service.

## **Myth: Freeways are for travel across the suburbs.**

Fact: Most travel in Melbourne is either local (short trips, unsuitable for freeways) or radial (long journeys to or towards the City, suitable for public transport). Few people travel long distances across the suburbs. For example, 0.8% of the Ringwood workforce travels to Dandenong; 0.5% of Dandenong workers travel to Ringwood.

## **Myth: Freeways create growth and jobs.**

Fact: There is no real-world evidence to support the freeways-jobs link. Melbourne has many more freeways than Sydney, but has been losing jobs to Sydney for two decades. Freeways create polluted concrete 'jungles' that scare investors away.

## **Myth: Freeways are needed for freight.**

Fact: The road lobby only started using freight as an argument for freeways when the idea of freeways for commuters became unpopular. The Russell Report into Eastern suburbs transport in Melbourne found that traffic congestion had little effect on freight, because most freight is moved outside peak hours.

## **Myth: The government is just joining up freeways that 'go nowhere'.**

Fact: The government is planning to more than double the size of Melbourne's freeway network, not just make a few links. Every new freeway that opens creates another 'dead end', which is used by the road lobby to press for still more freeways. Enough is enough!

## **Myth: You can't get people to give up their cars.**

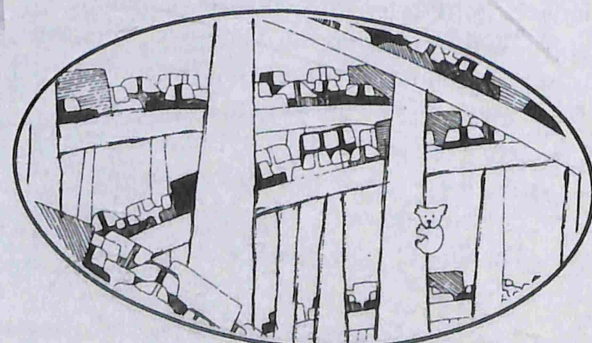
Fact: Solving Melbourne's traffic problems does not require people to stop driving cars. We need to shift a minority of trips - especially long trips focussed on the central city - to public transport, but most local travel will still be by car.

## **Myth: We would need to spend billions of dollars on new rail lines.**

Fact: Melbourne already has the largest urban rail network in the world relative to population and the largest tram system outside Europe. Some extensions are required, but what is really needed is improved service to attract passengers to the ample infrastructure that already exists.

## **Myth: Melbourne is too spread-out for public transport to work.**

Fact: This is the most widespread road lobby myth of all, but is also false. Melbourne's population density declined a little from the 1950s to 1970s, but the decline stopped 20 years ago. In recent years, Melbourne's density has actually increased. Most cities in North America have lower densities than Melbourne, including places with successful public transport like Vancouver. Toronto's population density is a little higher than Melbourne's, but is still comparable. The real difference is first-class public transport, which attracts passengers and reduces traffic problems even in spread-out cities with high car ownership.



# The solution: top quality public transport

*We cannot reduce congestion by building more roads since immediately we get more traffic to fill them up to the same speed as before. The only way to reduce congestion is to introduce better public transport facilities which reduce the number of people who travel by car on the roads.*

- Professor Martin Mogridge, University College London

At present, most Melburnians find public transport unattractive and inconvenient. It does not take people where they want to go at the times they want to travel. On Sunday evenings, for example, there are only seven bus routes operating in the whole of Melbourne, with none at all East of Warrigal Road, home to more people than metropolitan Adelaide. When services do run, they are slow, infrequent, uncoordinated, unreliable and frequently unsafe. It is not surprising that most people use their cars, even for trips to the central city.

People will think about using public transport when something is done about these problems. We can see what the solution looks like by considering Felicity, who lives in a suburb of Toronto.

Felicity's bus route runs frequently all the time, so she never has to wait more than a few minutes. It pulls right into the station, so Felicity walks out of the bus and straight onto the platform. Trains run every few minutes all through the day, until 1:45 am, so again there is virtually no waiting. All stations are staffed the whole time trains operate and all trains have guards: there is no dirt or graffiti on vehicles or stations. Nobody feels there is no dirt or graffiti on vehicles or stations. Nobody feels unsafe using trains in Toronto, and women can be seen travel-ling alone at all hours of the day and night. At the other end of her trip, Felicity transfers to a tram without leaving the station. The return trip costs \$3 Canadian (\$ 3.02 Australian).

## **The ingredients of first-class public transport.**

High quality public transport provides the sort of 'go anywhere anytime' convenience that attracts people to cars. It requires a fully-integrated, 'seamless' network with short waiting times and easy transfers. Because this has never been seen in Melbourne, many people have difficulty imagining it, or believing that it is possible, but in overseas cities with well-run public transport, it is regarded as perfectly normal.

As in the best systems overseas, the 'backbone' would be a fast, clean, reliable train service with maximum waiting times of ten minutes day and night. This would be 'fed' by a fully integrated system of trams (frequent, reliable services given priority over other traffic) and buses (direct, easy-to-understand routes with frequent services running day and night, weekday and weekend) that also provides local and cross-suburban links.

Passenger concerns about safety and cleanliness (especially on the rail system) would be addressed through full (but not excessive) station staffing and train 'conductors,' with

police (in smaller numbers than at present) used as emergency back-up, rather than on fruitless 'hide-and-seek' patrols. Fares would be set to compete with the car, rather than drive passengers away.

## **What about new lines?**

Most of the infrastructure required to carry people who are currently using freeways in Melbourne already exists. The South-Eastern Freeway corridor is well-covered by the Sandringham, Frankston, Cranbourne, Pakenham and Glen Waverley lines: improved service is what is required here, on trains, trams and connecting buses. The same is true in the West, with the Williamstown and Werribee lines.

In the Tullamarine corridor, three rail extensions are required. The Upfield service needs to be extended north to Craigieburn, to serve the growing housing estates in this area, while the St Albans line should be extended to Sunbury. Tullamarine Airport requires a rail link (one is being built to Sydney's airport), provided by extending the Broadmeadows line some 6 kilometres to the airport terminal. Express trains to the airport would travel to the City every 10 minutes, then continue to the Eastern suburbs, providing a direct cross-city link integrated into the public transport network, as well as a fast City service for business travellers. 'Out of hours' service would be provided economically by extending the regular Broadmeadows services to the airport.

Finally, the Eastern corridor, while partly covered by the Belgrave and Lilydale lines, contains the Doncaster 'gap'. A rail link to East Doncaster, together with associated improvements to trams and the Lilydale line, would cost \$ 300 million, far less than extending the Eastern Freeway (\$ 700 million). Again, these changes would need to be backed up by vastly improved service, on existing and new routes.

Suburban travellers will also benefit from this high-quality, interconnecting service. Notoriously inaccessible places like Monash University would be served by comprehensive networks of fast, frequent, direct services.

## **Where will the money come from?**

This can all be achieved without massive expenditure. The total capital costs are around \$ 500 million, compared with \$ 6.5 billion for Linking Melbourne. Nor need the operating deficit increase, since rail systems show what economists call 'returns to scale'. They cost a lot just to keep open, even if few passengers are carried, because most costs are fixed. As patronage increases, the cost per passenger falls, so public transport can make money by increasing patronage. This can be seen by comparing Melbourne with 'best practice' overseas:-

Share of operating costs recovered from fares	
Melbourne	35%
Toronto	68%
Vancouver	52%