

SIX POINT PLAN TO FIX PUBLIC TRANSPORT.



1. END THE FAILED PRIVATISATION EXPERIMENT

Privatisation of Melbourne's trams and trains has dramatically increased costs. Current performance is appalling and planning for future growth is chaotic. The Greens will end the failed privatisation experiment.

2. ESTABLISH A POWERFUL, ACCOUNTABLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

Public transport should be publicly run for the public good. The Greens will:

Establish a powerful, accountable public transport authority for Greater Melbourne, modelled on successful agencies like Translink in Vancouver, the ZVV in Zurich and Transperth.

Abolish the following bureaucracies and transfer their powers and funding – but not necessarily their staff – to the new agency:

- Director of Public Transport and Public Transport Division of the Department of Transport (some powers will be transferred to V/Line)
- Transport Ticketing Authority
- VicTrack (some powers transferred to V/Line)
- Metlink
- Public Transport Ombudsman
- Public Transport Customers Charter Consultative Committee

Staff the new agency with public transport experts recruited from the best-performing agencies around the world and not simply re-assign staff from the existing, failed bureaucracies. Based on the experience of Perth, Vancouver and Zurich, the agency will not need more than 50-60 staff in total, including a dozen public transport experts.

Make the PTA publicly accountable, holding public board meetings and seeking community input into its plans.

Bring operation of trains and trams under control of a public agency, either by termination of existing contracts for poor performance, or at their expiry in November 2017. The PTA will take control of routes, timetables, and service standards for buses.

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3. FIXING URGENT PROBLEMS

While the PTA is being established, the Greens will take immediate action to fix serious public transport problems. We will set up task forces charged with devising and implementing solutions to key problems. These will be small teams headed by international public transport experts from places like Switzerland and Scandinavia, and even Perth. As the PTA commences operations, some teams will transfer to the new organisation, others will remain as consultants until the project is completed.

The Train Task Force will review the operation of rail services and implement measures to unlock the capacity that already exists in the City Loop and Flinders Street Station. This will enable peak period services to be dramatically increased. The task force will incorporate the new peak services into a completely revised timetable, featuring simpler, more regular service patterns, higher off-peak and evening frequencies and all-day express running on longer lines. The task force will also produce a new plan for fast access by V/Line services to Southern Cross.

The Tram Task Force will conduct a similar review of tram services and priority measures. Simple speeding-up measures, focussed mainly on changes to traffic signals and smarter timetabling (e.g. operation of peak-period 'short' services over the busiest parts of lines) will enable large increases in peak capacity. As with trains, the extra peak services will be introduced along with new timetables offering higher off-peak and evening frequencies.

The Bus Task Force will completely restructure the network to create fast, frequent, direct, efficient routes designed to link with trams and trains. Frequencies and operating hours will be upgraded to match those of the connecting rail services; timetables will be planned in conjunction with the new rail timetables, and in consultation with affected communities and councils.

The Myki Task Force will conduct an independent, public review of the Myki ticketing system. It will be staffed by proven ticketing experts from agencies with working systems, such as Perth and Zurich, and will call on independent IT advice. The task force will recommend whether Myki can be fixed or whether it should be scrapped.

The Future Growth Task Force will start work on a genuine plan for system expansion, improvement and disability access, to be implemented by the new PTA once the urgent measures arising from Train, Tram and Bus Task Forces are 'bedded down'. This process will take about three years, as it will involve extensive participation of councils and the community. Proposals outlined in the Greens' "People Plan" will be important contributions to this public planning process.

The PTA Task Force will be the interim governing board for the PTA, responsible for selecting key initial staff and preparing the legal structure for the new body.

4. MAKE PUBLIC TRANSPORT SAFE

Staff all train stations from first to last train and reintroduce tram conductors to assist passengers.

Give staff training in making public transport safe. Staff are there to deter and report misbehaviour, actual security duties will be performed by police.

Fence rail lines and fix level crossings to reduce deaths and injuries on the rail system.

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5. EXTEND RAIL AND TRAM SYSTEMS

The Greens will:

Complete urgently needed extensions and upgrades for which land is already available, such as:

- Extend the rail line from South Morang to Doreen/Mernda.
- Double-track and electrify the Melton Line.
- Double-track single-track sections of the Hurstbridge (as far as Eltham), Altona, Cranbourne, Lilydale and Belgrave lines.
- Extend tram routes to East Malvern station, Doncaster Shoppingtown and Knox City.
- Increase the current order for trains and make more efficient use of the existing tram fleet.

Immediately start on medium-term projects, including:

- Increase peak-hour frequencies to at least 10 minutes
- Increase weekend, night, and late-night services.
- Add passing loops and flyovers to enable additional services
- Rebuild railway stations for safety, comfort and accessibility
- Work towards full compliance with Disability Discrimination Act standards
- Build rail extensions to Doncaster, Rowville, and Melbourne Airport.

6. 'SWISS-STYLE' PUBLIC TRANSPORT FOR REGIONAL VICTORIA

V/Line was taken back into public hands in 2003. Until recently, it operated in limbo, as the Bracks and Brumby governments tried to devise a way to re-privatise it. As a result, there was little long-term planning. However, V/Line has now been re-established as a public corporation with the necessary powers to do its job. It needs reform, rather than wholesale replacement.

The Greens will:

- Make V/Line more accountable by giving it a board that meets in public and seeks community input into its plans, as proposed for the Melbourne PTA.
- Make V-line responsible for rail freight in Victoria which, after a decade of privatisation, has almost completely disappeared.
- Order more high-speed trains.
- Hire planners from places with excellent regional transport, such as Switzerland, to devise an integrated rail-bus network connecting regional Victorians to local, inter-regional and Melbourne destinations.

Develop a staged program for:

- Track duplications, electrification and standardisation to allow for additional services.
- Reopening key closed rail lines, starting with Mildura.

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