



Five Year Public Transport Priorities: Breathing New Life into Melbourne's Public Transport

Melbourne's liveability is central to the city's continued economic growth and social sustainability. This liveability is threatened by growing levels of traffic congestion and by the difficulties faced by people without private cars, especially those living in the fast-growing outer areas. Melbourne's traffic congestion alone is estimated to cost about \$4 billion annually, a huge economic waste.

At the same time, Melbourne's level of motor vehicle dependence for freight and personal travel poses a concern for climate change caused by greenhouse gas emissions, and is associated with an unacceptable level of traffic accidents. About 150 people are killed on the city's roads each year, and 4500 are seriously injured. Motor vehicle dependence also contributes to growing obesity problems observed by VicHealth, linked to a lack of physical exercise.

Significantly improving public transport service levels can help to ensure that the city's liveability and the health of its citizens is not undermined by these growing transport problems.

The State Government recognizes these concerns and understands that public transport can play a vital role in resolving them. The Government has shown vision in setting a target for 20% of motorized trips to be made on public transport by the year 2020 and has set the strategic direction for delivering 20/2020, in its *Metropolitan Transport Plan*.

The Committee for Melbourne has assembled an expert group, including senior representatives of all public transport modes, to recommend what is needed to achieve this change. This Five Year Public Transport package sets out the Committee's priorities for the period to 2011.

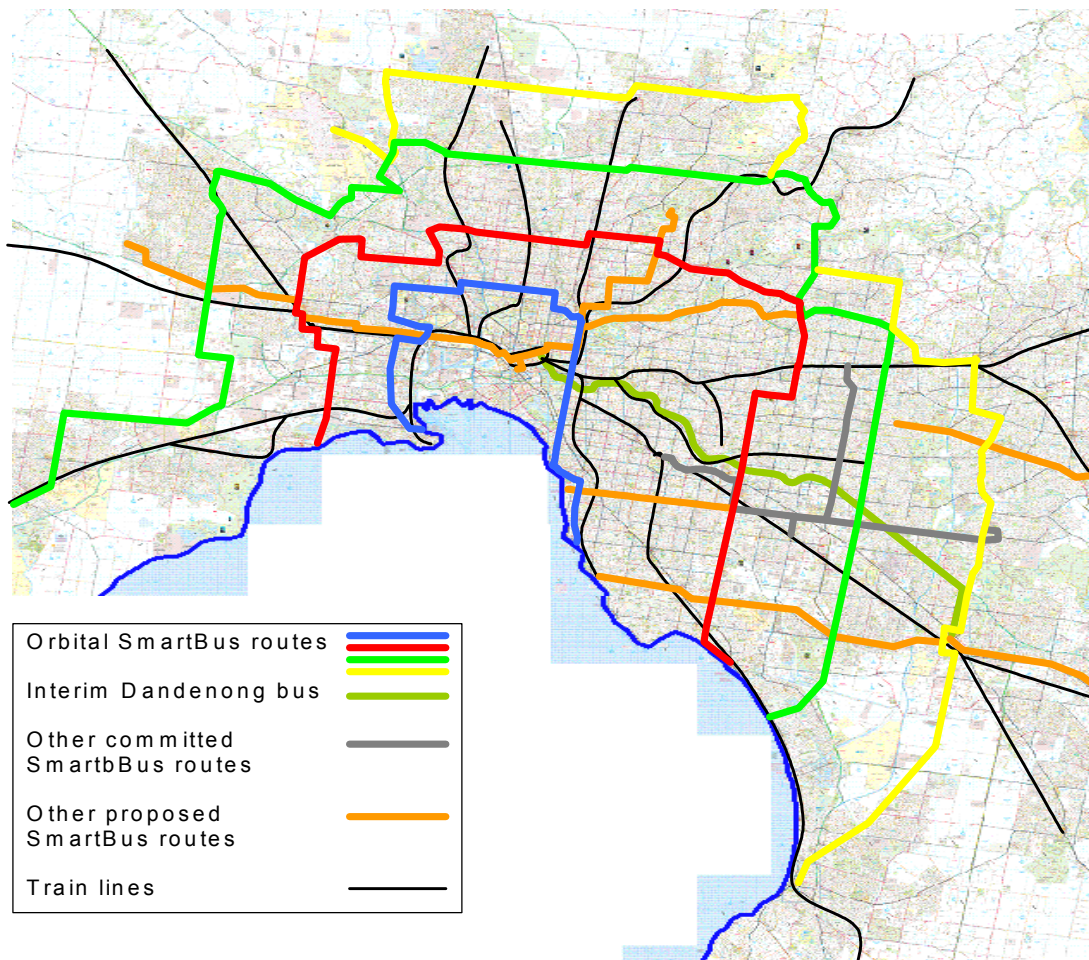
Upgrading Melbourne's Bus Services

About two-thirds of Melburnians have no train or tram services nearby, making bus their only viable local public transport option. The Government is to be commended on beginning to upgrade bus service levels but more needs to be done, especially in the middle and outer suburbs. All services need to operate on weekends and evenings. This will ensure that all Melburnians have a decent public transport choice. The estimated cost to upgrade local bus services is approximately \$70 million annually by 2011.

In addition, the rollout out of the SmartBus network needs to be accelerated. This caters primarily for higher capacity non-radial movements in the middle to outer suburbs, including serving activity centres and rail stations. The existing SmartBus services have been very successful in growing bus patronage. Accelerating rollout to new routes will encourage some people to shift from car to public transport and assist in reducing traffic congestion.

The initiative will cost approximately \$50 million annually for higher service levels and \$165 million for SmartBus capital works (including bus priority measures to improve operating speeds).

The following map shows the routes the Committee proposes for development over the next five years.



Proposed SmartBus Network 2011

NB: Map shows indicative network only – detailed route determination would be subject to analysis.

Priority and Accessibility for Melbourne's Trams

Trams are increasingly being held up by other road traffic, reducing service efficiency and effectiveness. The average tram operating speed today is 15.5 kph, this speed having declined by 8% over the past five years. Without major remedial action, further declines in speed are likely.

The Government's Think Tram program has begun to deliver improved tram running times. It should be expanded. This will benefit existing users, attract increased patronage and free up resources to improve peak and off-peak service frequencies, completing a virtuous circle of service enhancement.

The estimated cost of this initiative is \$20 million per annum over the five year period. Key initial priorities are shown in the accompanying map.

A major fleet replacement and expansion program for Melbourne's trams is also required, to cater for patronage growth and improve accessibility, at an estimated capital cost of \$220 million by 2011.

DDA requirements are also a major priority for the tram system, with an accessible stop program of \$150million over 5 years being required to meet DDA legislative timelines.



Stage 1 Think Tram priority routes

Enhancement to Rolling Stock/Vehicle Fleets

The Committee's proposals, added to other initiatives and commitments of government, are estimated to increase public transport patronage by about 37% (or 140 million trips/year) after five years. This significant rate of increase in patronage, together with fleet upgrading requirements, will require additions to Melbourne's train, tram and bus fleets, as noted in the preceding modal overviews. In summary, the Committee estimates the additional requirement by 2011 will be for about :

- 70 new trams
- 200 new buses
- 12 new six-car train sets.

The fleet upgrades will improve fleet accessibility in terms of DDA requirements. It will also enhance user perceptions of the quality and safety of travelling by public transport, all of which aids in competing with the private car. It will also add to Victorian employment, since much of the vehicle assembly would be undertaken at local facilities.

Benefits of the Proposals

These initiatives complement others already committed, such as the New Ticketing Solution, Travel Smart and interchange upgrades. They add up to a package that will make a real difference to public transport service levels and patronage in Melbourne (for further details on the proposed package, refer to the attached presentation materials).

To sustain Melbourne's liveability, the Committee believes that the public transport mode share needs to be increased by about three percentage points over the next five years. The Committee's estimates indicate that the package of measures proposed, when added to existing initiatives, will achieve this outcome.

Vital benefits expected from the proposed Public Transport initiatives include the following:

- Support for a continuation of the recent growth in Melbourne's central area;
- A significant increase in travel choices for the large number of those Melburnians currently excluded from fully engaging in the opportunities our community offers, because of their restricted travel options.
- A reduction of \$0.5-1 billion annually in road congestion costs;
- Significant benefits to public transport users;
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions (approx 240 million tonnes per annum reduction by 2011);

- About 3-5 fewer road fatalities and 100 or so fewer serious casualty accidents each year;
- Additional health benefits from increased physical activity;
- A significant regeneration of the state of our public transport services, positioning the city to better handle the continued growth in personal travel; and,
- A stimulus to Victorian manufacturing activity and employment, through the local building of new trains, trams and buses.

The Committee estimates that the package will cost about \$2 billion over five years in capital cost terms. This overall public transport infrastructure package is similar to the rate of capital expenditure currently being devoted to Regional Fast rail and the Spencer St Station upgrade. It is modest relative to proposed expenditures on public transport infrastructure in Brisbane and Sydney.

In recurrent terms, the package will cost about \$150 million by 2011 (in 2005 prices), in addition to the present recurrent public transport expenditure level of about \$900 million. A substantial part of this increased recurrent expenditure is expected to be recoverable from increased farebox revenues.

Overall, the Committee expects the value of the benefits from the package to be about three times the cost of the proposed initiatives. This reflects the urgency of the proposed package.

In total, the package adds to Melbourne's economic, social and environmental sustainability, all of which contribute to enhanced livability. The Committee commends it to the Melbourne community, the State Government and to all key stakeholders.

Melbourne, November 2005