



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Premier of Victoria

Wednesday, 20 August, 2008

PASSENGER NUMBERS CONTINUE TO GROW ON MELBOURNE'S PUBLIC TRANSPORT NETWORK

Patronage on Melbourne's public transport network has hit a record high with 450.8 million passenger trips made in the past financial year as the Victorian Government continues its multi-million dollar investment to boost train, tram and bus services.

Premier John Brumby today announced passenger trips on metropolitan trains reached 201.2 million between 2007 and 2008 – a record high driven by growth of 12.7 per cent with trams and buses achieving 158.3 million trips and 91.3 million trips respectively.

"These figures show train, tram and bus services are more popular than ever and since becoming Premier, I have made it clear that public transport continues to be a key priority for the Government," Mr Brumby said.

"In that time we have introduced 300 new weekly services to the metropolitan train timetable, rolled out the Early Bird Metcard and fast tracked the purchase of eight additional six-carriage trains on top of an earlier commitment for ten.

"Last September, Public Transport Minister Lynne Kosky and I opened the \$115 million Craigieburn rail extension and a new station at Roxburgh Park.

"Our record investment helped carry 32.4 million more passengers across the entire system in the past 12 months and that is why we continue to invest in the train, tram and bus networks and boost services across all three modes."

Viewing progress of the \$34.9 million upgrade of North Melbourne station with the Premier today, Ms Kosky said the recent State Budget delivered another record investment to boost public transport capacity with \$794.1 million committed for infrastructure projects.

"We are building on our proven commitment to public transport and it is pleasing to see our investment is paying off," Ms Kosky said.

"Tram patronage continues to grow with 3.4 million more trips carried on trams and 6.3 million more on buses in the past 12 months.

"Bus travel has grown by 7.4 per cent in the past year and since 2006 we have upgraded more than 110 bus routes with longer operating hours and increased frequencies. Sunday bus patronage has grown by 44 per cent in the past year alone.

"One of the best bus success stories is right here at North Melbourne. Last October, the Premier and I announced the new Route 401 bus offering a three-minute frequency in peak periods from the station to the University of Melbourne and the Parkville hospital precinct.

"Since starting in March, Route 401 carries 2800 commuters every day, saving passengers up to 30 minutes by avoiding the City Loop."

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North Melbourne Station works are well progressed. Three of five canopies to cover platforms are in place and construction of a new station entrance at the city end will connect all six platforms via lifts and escalators.

Mr Brumby said North Melbourne was an important junction for metropolitan and regional trains and the upgrade would make transferring between services easier for passengers when it is completed in 2010.

“Five suburban train lines and the majority of V/Line services pass through North Melbourne and this project is about the amenity of the station as a major public transport hub,” he said.

“We are investing in public transport but there is more to do. That is why we are developing the Victorian Transport Plan to deliver the best transport system for Victoria.”

Ms Kosky said changes to the metropolitan train timetable in November will clear bottlenecks on the network.

“We will be adding more services and some changes will occur but passengers should understand these are necessary to make the entire train network run more efficiently,” she said.

“From November, Werribee line services will run direct to Flinders Street in peak times instead of going through the Loop, freeing up capacity for more services and improving performance for five metropolitan rail lines.

“Reliability will improve for Epping and Hurstbridge in November with both lines running one way through the City Loop removing a pressure point at Jolimont.”

More information on public transport improvements can be found at www.transport.vic.gov.au

Public Transport Patronage Growth by Financial Year

| Financial Year | Metro train | | Tram | | Bus | | Metro total | |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| | Boardings (million) | Annual growth (%) | Boardings (million) | Annual growth (%) | Boardings (million) | Annual growth (%) | Boardings (million) | Annual growth (%) |
| 2000-01 | 130.3 | 4.9 | 129.4 | 1.6 | 92.0 | 0.4 | 351.7 | 2.5 |
| 2001-02 | 131.8 | 1.2 | 131.9 | 1.9 | 92.0 | 0.0 | 355.7 | 1.1 |
| 2002-03 | 133.8 | 1.5 | 134.7 | 2.1 | 93.9 | 2.1 | 362.4 | 1.9 |
| 2003-04 | 134.9 | 0.8 | 135.9 | 0.9 | 93.6 | -0.3 | 364.4 | 0.6 |
| 2004-05 | 145.1 | 4.0 | 145.3 | 2.0 | 90.0 | Stable | 380.4 | 2.5 |
| 2005-06 | 159.1 | 9.7 | 149.6 | 2.9 | 79.1 | Stable* | 387.8 | 4.9 |
| 2006-07 | 178.6 | 12.2 | 154.9 | 3.6 | 85.0 | 7.4 | 418.4 | 7.9 |
| 2007-08 | 201.2 | 12.7 | 158.3 | 2.2 | 91.3 | 7.4 | 450.8 | 7.7 |

*Measurement of bus patronage was amended at this time using improved methodology from operators and Metlink and is reflected in appropriate years' budget papers.

Public Transport Projects Underway

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| Short term | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of three-stage timetable overhaul to make the train network perform at its peak with first stage adding 105 new services in April this year • Introduction of Early Bird ticketing to all metropolitan rail lines • Route 401 from North Melb station to Melbourne Uni |
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| Medium term | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase of 18 new trains with a staged roll-out from late 2009 • Upgrade of major interchange points such as North Melbourne • Development of back of house infrastructure projects including Cranbourne stabling • Extra tracks on the Werribee, Dandenong, Epping/Hurstbridge and Craigieburn lines. • Delivery of more park and ride facilities at stations • Delivery of a radial bus network through SmartBus to connect suburbs and multi-modal transport hubs • Improve existing local bus services • Continued projects to give trams greater priority, improve tracks and provide better platform access |
| Long term | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing the future of public transport through the development of the Victorian Transport Plan to be released in November |