

# CORRECTED VERSION

## SELECT COMMITTEE ON TRAIN SERVICES

### Inquiry into the factors leading to and causes of failures in the provision of metropolitan and V/Line train services

Melbourne — 22 September 2009

#### Members

Mr B. Atkinson  
Mr G. Barber  
Mr D. Drum  
Ms J. Huppert

Mr S. Leane  
Mr E. O'Donohue  
Mr M. Viney

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#### Witness

Dr J. Stone, project officer, Australasian Centre for the Governance and Management of Urban Transport (GAMUT), University of Melbourne.

**The DEPUTY CHAIR** — Good morning, everyone. I declare open this public hearing of the Legislative Council Select Committee on Train Services. Before proceeding further I would like to advise that the committee chair, Mr Bruce Atkinson, is ill this morning. Mr Atkinson hopes to join us later in the day depending on how he is travelling. Mr Matt Viney is also unwell and is an apology, and Mr Drum will be joining us around 11 o'clock. Today's hearings are in relation to the factors leading to and the causes of failures in the provision of metropolitan and V/Line services. This is the second day of public hearings, following earlier hearings with the Department of Transport and Connex.

I welcome Dr Stone from the Australian Centre for the Governance and Management of Urban Transport. All evidence taken at the hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege as provided by the Constitution Act 1975 and is further subject to the provisions of the Legislative Council standing orders. Any comments made outside the hearing may not be afforded such privilege. All evidence is being recorded by Hansard, and witnesses will be provided with proof versions of the transcript in the next couple of days. Witnesses can correct errors that need to be amended but not the substance of what they have said. Dr Stone, could you make some opening remarks before we go to questions.

**Dr STONE** — Thanks, Chair. What I would like to do is provide a little bit of context for our submission, and I hope a bit of context for the evidence that you will be hearing from other witnesses today.

**The DEPUTY CHAIR** — Fantastic.

**Dr STONE** — My background is nearly 20 years of dealing with the managers of Melbourne's public transport system, first as an environmental advocate and a policy adviser to local councils, and then the last five years as a researcher at Melbourne University. It is clear from the environmental imperatives that we do not just need to make public transport work for the sorts of loads that we are dealing with now; we need to find ways of making it grow even further into the future.

At the basis of our problems in Melbourne is an entrenched competition between modes rather than a way of building our modes into a single network. We have a legacy of institutions which had their heyday back in the 1920s and which still affect the way we manage the system today. One of the most difficult things for new people coming in to try and understand the problems of public transport in Melbourne is the extent to which those entrenched patterns of operations and management obstruct moves towards best practice. Those impediments have been in place for many years. Even things like multimodal ticketing, which we take for granted as one of the important things which reduces the financial penalty of making a transfer between a train and a tram, took the threat of sackings by the then minister, Rob Maclellan, in 1981, and then some really hard work by his successor, Steve Crabb, to overcome the operational management resistance to those changes. First they said, 'We will not do it', and then they said, 'If we do it, it will not work'. Then they tried to convince Crabb that it had not worked, and then he had to push them to demonstrate that it had worked. It was a bipartisan approach to get the management of the system to do what ought to have been done. I can list many more examples over the last couple of decades of my experience of poor advice to government and spin with data that explains chronic patronage decline and what we should do with the current growth.

Turning from that to the rail failures in particular, over the last few years rail operations have been very inefficient. That comes as a result of years of underutilising the very large track capacity that we have through years of chronic patronage stagnation. We have forgotten how to do things which we did when we were a world leader almost a century ago. The response unfortunately is not to try and fix some of those operational inefficiencies but to think about very big capital works. We can historically look at the precedent for that with the Melbourne loop. When we were dealing with the problems of a spreading suburban development in the 1970s we said, 'What will we do?'. The decision was made to focus capital works in the centre rather than thinking of how we might link services in the suburbs, which other cities, notably Toronto, did at that time and have reaped the benefits of since.

To turn to the model that we use that is outlined in our submission, it has a software focus, a customer focus and a focus on building a network which allows people to move between different parts of the city as determined by our land use plans, and out of that network planning comes a simplified timetable. If you are a network operator in Switzerland, for example, you have a timetable which you can draw on a piece of paper for one hour of the day, and that is your timetable for the day, for the week and for the year. You can build something that you offer to the community around your timetable and around the connections that you offer between trains, trams and

buses, and from that simplified timetable you can then identify your infrastructure gaps. If you have trains always passing all day at the same point because of the way your timetable is established, then you know that is the point where you have to have extra capacity. You do not necessarily have to build huge capacity along the whole line which you find you have to do if you have the erratic sort of timetable we have today.

From those ideas and that sort of generation of your infrastructure needs, you really need to test that in as wide a possible field as you can, and the Perth experience is very relevant here. For example, when they were thinking of how they would bring their new southern railway into central Perth there was a Labor Party-backed scheme to come one way, there was a City of Perth-backed scheme to come another way and there was a Liberal Party-backed scheme to come another way; each of those had different groups of rail operators and rail engineers supporting them. There was a fair bit of confusion about which way to go, but there was an open committee process where all those ideas were put on the table and tested, and it became clear that bringing it right through the centre up the freeway, under the river and into central Perth was the best way to go, and you can see the results of that. Rather than having your decisions produced in toto from inside the black box of the department, we need to work out ways where these things are much more openly debated.

For example, in Melbourne the Tarneit line and even the big central city tunnel are really the brainchild of a single planner, as I understand it, inside the Department of Transport. For all his skill, he is coming from one perspective, and these are huge infrastructure projects which really need to be debated from a wide range of perspectives, and that is what hopefully this committee can help to open up.

That is all I would like to say at the moment. Perhaps both my submission and the supplementary submission, which give some information about our understanding of what happened within the relationships between Connex, the unions and the government over the last summer, might be useful background information.

**The DEPUTY CHAIR** — Fantastic. Can I just start by asking you to give us a background of the Australasian Centre for the Governance and Management of Urban Transport — who it is, how it is funded and its creation?

**Dr STONE** — Yes. It is an independent research organisation. It is part of a series of seven centres of research excellence which are funded by the Volvo Research and Educational Foundations. There are centres across the world, and the Melbourne centre links researchers in Perth, Brisbane, Shanghai and Japan as well. We are an Asian Australasian centre and part of an international network of independent research groups.

**The DEPUTY CHAIR** — So it is an international network that was started from overseas.

**Dr STONE** — Yes. We are in the faculty of architecture, building and planning at the University of Melbourne, but we have links with Griffith University, Curtin University and international universities as well.

**Mr O'DONOHUE** — Thank you very much for being here this morning, Doctor. In your submission you talk about other cities and what has happened in Zurich, Ottawa, Vancouver and elsewhere. One of the things you talk about is a multi-destinational integrated system. Do you want to make some comments about Melbourne's system in that regard? In particular, do you think the orbital bus network that has been developed will achieve those multi-destinational outcomes and that the bus network is integrated properly with the rail system?

**Dr STONE** — I think it is a start to try to recognise that we have demands for cross-suburban travel, but I think it is interesting that we have a route that runs from Altona to Mordialloc but that nobody travels that full distance. What I think is more important in building cross-suburban travel is looking at the shorter distances that most people travel. Most people's travel is within a radial wedge of Melbourne. It might take them away from the rail system for 4, 5, 6 or 10 kilometres, but it usually crosses a single rail system and then moves north and south in a radial path.

What most cities find when they are building multi-destinational systems which work well is that to have the long cross-suburban routes you do actually need to make transfers at particular nodes. You do not ever use the same bus to go the full distance. What is most important is that, say from Doncaster Shoppingtown to Box Hill station, for example, you would make sure that you had a very well-organised route that ran quickly from that node to Box Hill station, and then you might have another node there going from Doncaster to Heidelberg on the Hurstbridge line. You really organise your system within wedges but, through various mechanisms, allow

people to travel across the city. We have not really cracked it yet, I do not think, in Melbourne to build a very strong multi-destinational system. Partly that is because no-one is really responsible for putting those pieces together.

The absolute classic example is the Huntingdale railway station to Monash University route, which given the nature of the students using that route, should be our no. 1 priority in getting things right, but it has only been very recently, in response to its being used as an example by myself and other people, that they have changed the timetables to improve those operations. But it is still not, in terms of its physical layout, a very comfortable place to make a transition. To try to find your way from Huntingdale station to the bus stop is really confusing, and as one international commentator on these things — one of my colleagues — says, ‘If you have to walk more than 10 paces, it is not really a transfer’. Huntingdale falls down completely there, so we have not really been able to organise things, either in terms of the temporal organisation of the timetables or the spatial layout of the operations. You can see that in the fact that on a tram you only have information about tram routes. You do not have a picture of the whole network, and it is impossible really to draw a picture of our bus network that anybody could understand.

**Mr BARBER** — In your submission, in your executive summary recommendation, you mention the ‘failure of the partnership and franchising models’, as you say, ‘in clear lines of accountability for service planning, timetabling or maintenance and capital works’. The government’s submission actually points this out as quite a strong feature. They describe the different roles in the classic model of what we understand as steering and rowing. What is wrong with that, in your opinion, if you are saying it has been a failure?

**Dr STONE** — I think the main failure is the failure in service planning, because as I just said, there isn’t anybody who is really responsible for making the bus services and the train services link together. I had a masters student go and talk to the people whose titles say ‘I do timetables at the Department of Transport’ or ‘I do timetables at Connex’ and work out how they talk to each other. Really the message is they all think it is the other person’s job to force these changes through.

**Mr BARBER** — So there is confusion between steering and rowing; that is the first thing.

**Dr STONE** — Yes, and each is looking over the other’s shoulder waiting for the other to make the move. That is really the fundamental problem, and then from that you do not get any clarity about your capital works needs because you have not got a clear timetable from which to build up to a systematic capital works program.

**Mr BARBER** — So you are saying timetabling falls out of service planning?

**Dr STONE** — Yes.

**Mr BARBER** — And capital works falls out of the system you have decided to provide?

**Dr STONE** — Yes.

**Mr BARBER** — Why has that not happened? They have told us that the roles are there and they are separated, and that nobody is getting tangled up rowing while they are supposed to be steering. You are saying nobody is steering?

**Dr STONE** — Yes. I think part of it has been that nobody expected the growth to occur as it has in the last six years, despite the fact that the original franchise contracts were built on huge patronage growth. I do not think there is any evidence that anybody really expected that to happen. In the government submission Jim Betts in his evidence acknowledges that when the demographic changes which were the initial trigger for this growth in demand took place it took people by surprise. They are really struggling to catch up, and they fall back all the time onto their old silo management. Even a few years ago we had a train plan, a tram plan and a bus plan, and when I, with my colleagues from local government, went to talk to people about that and said, ‘Why isn’t it integrated?’, they said, ‘It is integrated. The people are sitting at adjacent desks’.

**Mr BARBER** — That is a good start, isn’t it?

**Dr STONE** — It is a start, but it has not been followed through.

**Ms HUPPERT** — We are talking about the train services here, but we seem to have got onto the bus services. I understand that we have a planning agency, which is the public transport section of the Department of Transport, and that has been organising a review of the buses, which is looking at the types of things that you have been looking at and is doing planning and is doing very extensive public consultation. I have in fact attended some of these public consultations and listened to people talking about how they use the bus services, and they are informing timetabling and routing, which of course is very important because bus services do provide, as you have recognised, a very important role in orbital and multi-destinational transport.

Having regard to that, I find it a little difficult to say that there is not input from a variety of sources into your planning. The other example of input into planning is the Eddington review, which did seek and consider submissions from a whole range of people. So having regard to that, could you just explain how you can say that decisions are being made by a single planner within the Department of Transport?

**Dr STONE** — My last remark is based on the rail system, and I will come to that in a second, but I have also attended a number of these consultations about bus services and I found them particularly unsatisfactory because they were not helping people to understand the choices that you have to make in building a bus system; they simply asked people what they would like. Some people said punctuality, some people said connections and some people said other things, but there was no sense of any sort of synthesis of those views or a sense of the choices that you might have to make in building up a system.

It really smacked to me of the consultants providing enough information with whatever recommendations they would make to demonstrate that there was community support for that. It did not actually help people understand what are the resource constraints and what are the difficulties in running a good bus system in the way that planning processes that I have studied in other cities did, so I think there are a number of flaws in those systems.

But in terms of the ideas that have come forward for dealing with the problems that we have in the rail system, the Tarneit line for example is not part of any long-term planning vision in the way that some of the radial lines like Rowville or Doncaster or the extensions of other lines have been. Despite the fact that we have had the Eddington review and we have had other bits of material available publicly, we still do not have a clear idea of the travel time difference between this route and the existing route for the V/Line passengers for Geelong. What penalty will there be for people coming from Geelong? We still do not have a clear indication of how we are going to deal with people from Geelong who are trying to reach Werribee.

There are a lot of the basic questions that you would have in understanding the rationale for these things which are not in the public domain and which, in planning processes which get to successful outcomes where people get behind the investment, we would expect to be answered. I think the problem and a lot of the heat and light that you see in a lot of these debates is due to people genuinely wanting to see better public transport for Melbourne but feeling that a lot of the questions that they have, which are genuine questions, are not being answered and not being taken seriously, and so there is a need for a process which is seen to be more inclusive than the processes that we have had to date.

**Ms HUPPERT** — I will just follow up on that. As I said, I attended a bus review and it was commenced by a slide presentation by the consultants which did actually describe the constraints that the bus services have to deal with, so I am a little bit surprised at your answer. I would have thought that the bus review, which was well publicised and well advertised, was a very good example of allowing people to be involved very intimately in the planning process and to have their views heard. That is why I am a little bit surprised at the answer which does not seem to be based in fact.

**Dr STONE** — It would be interesting to talk to you about which reviews you went to, because the one that I went to at Coburg did present some of those issues but did not provide any context for people being able to resolve those questions. It left people in the end having their opinion but being none the wiser really in terms of how a good bus system might operate.

**The DEPUTY CHAIR** — Dr Stone, in your submission you use Perth a lot as an example. Is that fair to use as an example for Melbourne? Is it comparing apples with watermelons, as in the size and the amount of services? What are Perth's figures in comparison to Melbourne's? Melbourne runs over 12 500 weekly services and moves, I think, over 210 million passengers a year? How does Perth compare to Melbourne?

**Dr STONE** — I acknowledge that there are differences of scale between Melbourne and Perth, but that is not really the issue that we are trying to draw out in making these comparisons. What we are trying to do in the comparisons that we have used there is to look at cities which have made what we see as some of the fundamental changes in terms of trying to build a land-use public transport system which helps to reduce car use over the longer term. It is hard to find examples of success in that regard.

Perth is there as an example of where some systematic investment in public transport has been made. The other important thing that we can draw from Perth is the fact that there is now bipartisan support for investment in public transport and there is strong public support for investment in public transport, so even the delays around central Perth that were caused by building the underground did not seem to cause great public unrest because there was a sense that this was something that was for the benefit of the city. Really the lessons there are to do with the processes whereby these decisions gained institutional support, political support and ultimately community support. Those are the sort of things where we think there are lessons from Perth for Melbourne, but I understand that Melbourne is a more complex entity.

**Mr O'DONOHUE** — Dr Stone, I pick up the point made in your submission about the absolute number of trips made by people using the rail network in Melbourne in 2006 compared to 1976, and the comparison you made with other cities around Australia. Following on from Mr Leane's comment, Sydney is a city which has a more expansive network and yet, on your figures, has a 21 per cent higher number of travellers compared to 1976, whereas Melbourne only has a 9 per cent increase. What has Sydney done in the last 30 years that Melbourne has not?

**Dr STONE** — I think there are a number of things that Sydney did, and most of them are things that they did quite some time ago and not things that they are doing today. One of the things that they were more able to do than we were in the 1970s and 1980s was to constrain some of the suburban retail development and employment development into nodes, which were served by their rail system. We look at our suburban shopping centre developments and bemoan the fact that we were not able to constrain them into locations around the rail system, and we say, "The market was too powerful; how could we have possibly done anything different?". Sydney was able to build things like Parramatta, and now Westfield and the other large suburban shopping centre developers fight very hard to make sure that they are not freestanding developments away from the rail line to compete with them. They were able to do some things of that nature.

**Mr O'DONOHUE** — Those like Bondi Junction and Chatswood?

**Dr STONE** — Yes, those land-use decisions which our board of works really proposed in the 1970s, but although we did have the legislative mechanism, we did not have the political will to force them to happen. We did things like build Monash University in Clayton rather than at Caulfield, which was the original idea. If we had had Monash at the centre of the rail system, south-eastern Melbourne would probably have a very different feel to it today. We made those sorts of decision, and while some of the road investments were avoided in the 1970s and 1980s by the Wran government, we took the opportunity to expand our road system. Some of those changes had influences in being able to maintain Sydney's mode share as high as it is. Although they have some very major problems today in keeping up with that growth and maintaining it, but they got ahead at that time.

**Mr BARBER** — Another one of your recommendations is the establishment of measurable targets for shift of mode share away from car travel across Melbourne and regional Victoria. The government has already got that — it has got 20 per cent by 2020. Are you suggesting there is something wrong with that sort of high-level target, or do you think there should be targets for geographic subsections, for times of day and for particular types of trips? What is the aim of doing that better than what they would say they have already done?

**Dr STONE** — I think it is a geographic basis, because you could say obviously that there are some parts of Melbourne which are already at 20 per cent. What are they today? What are targets for growth in all areas of the city so we do not just rest on our laurels in some parts of the city? It is also a question of understanding better exactly what the distribution of trips is over the course of the day. We have these very large patronage growth figures, and I have seen the spin that has been put on patronage figures over the 15 to 20 years that I have been following this data: each time there is a new form of measuring public transport figures it gives us some growth. We need to look behind the way we are measuring patronage growth figures, but we also need to look at their spread over the day and over the week. As I said in my supplementary submission, I really encourage this committee to seek from the Department of Transport some better indication of the breakdown of this growth in

patronage — how much of it is in the peak, and how much of it is on Sundays due to the changes in services and fares we have had. I think we might find that that tsunami of a problem that appears to be the case when we have figures showing 50 per cent patronage growth might not be as huge as we might otherwise envisage. Setting targets for times of day and for geographic area gives us a much better focus on the data that we need in order to measure whether we are achieving those targets and then to put in place practical measures to achieve them. In other cities that very focused attention to target setting has been really important in encouraging managers to provide the innovation that is needed to reach those targets.

**Ms HUPPERT** — I just wanted to ask about the regional rail. You referred earlier in your answer to the issues relating to the Tarneit line. Clearly that is one of our highest population growth areas, so it would appear logical to place a new rail line in that area. Also there seems to have been an upsurge in the use of regional rail. What we are talking about here is separating regional rail from the metropolitan rail. Clearly from some of the submissions that we have seen the issue of metropolitan rail and regional rail sharing lines has been one of the major concerns for members of the public. Do you have any comment on the sorts of increases we are seeing in the use of regional rail and the impact that is having on the whole of the system, not just metropolitan but statewide?

**Dr STONE** — I think the improvements to the service and the improvements in patronage demonstrate that there is a willingness by the community to use public transport if it is provided at a good standard, and the regional rail successes bear that out. But I think that we have to be careful to not overemphasise the need to separate regional and suburban travel. The infrastructure engineer's desire is always to say, 'We have got some increased demand. Let's build new expensive infrastructure to deal with that capacity'. I refer a lot to the Swiss example in terms of that always being the pressure there. They have experienced 30 years of patronage growth; they are well used to this cycle of asking, 'What do we do now that patronage has met the targets that we have set for growth?'. They recognise that there is a very strong push then for more infrastructure, but they also have a very strong strand in their engineering and planning culture to ask, 'What can we do with the existing infrastructure to make it possible to avoid or absolutely minimise the investment that we are making in new infrastructure?'.

That is where the approach to having a very regular timetable draws out exactly where you need to build that new infrastructure and where you need to have strong coordination between the operators of the different services. I fear that some of the demand for extensive infrastructure in the Melbourne context comes from a failure of coordination between V/Line and suburban rail operators. The desire to separate becomes a way of getting around coordination problems that could be addressed in other ways.

The Swiss system operates with gaps between trains of a very few seconds — 15-second windows for train operations — which can only be achieved if you have a very clearly established and regular timetable pattern. Our system of allowing 2 minutes early or 6 minutes late running of trains makes it impossible to plan for that sort of level of service. Rather than fixing that we say we have to separate the trains.

Again, we say we need a whole new line through from Sunshine to Melbourne. Looking at the existing rail infrastructure on some of the freight lines that carry one or two trains a day through the Footscray Dynon yard area, it seems to me that a lot could be done with improved use of that. I fear we are locking ourselves behind saying, 'We cannot do anything until we get \$10 billion or large amounts of money for a tunnel and \$4 billion for the Tarneit line, then we can actually deal with some of those problems'.

**Ms HUPPERT** — You have no comment then on the timetabling changes that have happened — for example, the changes that have brought in directional changes through the loop? Surely they are the sorts of things you are talking about that are being done at the moment.

**Dr STONE** — Sure.

**Ms HUPPERT** — Do you not accept that there has been work, but that what we are duelling with is a massive increase in use and there has to be a multi-focused approach?

**Dr STONE** — Sure. I absolutely agree there needs to be a multi-focused approach, and I feel we have made some moves to take up some of those options for increasing capacity on the existing system. But I do not think they have been explored yet to the extent they might be, and I do not think we have explored the idea of modelling a regular timetable or defined where our capacity constraints might be to see whether there is a

solution. For example, what do we do if for various reasons the commonwealth government says, 'You've got \$4 billion for the Regional Rail Link, but for the next 20 years that is it in terms of commonwealth investment in urban public transport in Melbourne'. What do we do if we cannot build the tunnel as the Department of Transport would like us to do? What are the short-term and the medium-term ways of increasing the capacity of our system if that is not possible? I am sure that will be a subject for other witnesses later today.

**Mr O'DONOHUE** — Dr Stone, I noted your comments on the cost of works. There seems to have been an explosion in recent years as to the estimated cost of works. Others have made comparisons between the cost of building 70 kilometres of line as opposed to what are relatively small extensions such as to Cranbourne East and South Morang and even the Tarneit line that has had \$4 billion. Have you any observations or comments that you want to make about that?

**Dr STONE** — They do seem like very large numbers, and we have tried to explore that with the Department of Transport to understand the basis for that. We find there are operational costs, new rolling stock and all sorts of other parts of the operation that are built into that cost. It is quite hard to get an actual figure for kilometres of track being built. Even there they seem to be quite large numbers. This is just an observation based on experience, but I just wonder if there is a bit of fear of cost blow-outs of the type that occurred in the regional rail projects. It might be a case of saying, 'Let's make sure we don't have a cost blow-out. If we get this much money, maybe we can come in under budget'. I think it just reflects the fact that it is a long time since rail engineers in Melbourne have had any money to play with in terms of investment, and I think there is a lot of playing safe going on.

It seems to me that it ought be possible to build those rail links for much less than what is being proposed. Part of the problem is that we do not get a really clear idea of what actually makes up those costs, so it is hard to make that call. It is just a reflection on the difficulties in getting an information exchange in and out of the department.

**Mr O'DONOHUE** — Just to clarify that, in your discussions with the department items such as rolling stock and other items which are separate to the track construction are bundled up?

**Dr STONE** — They appear to be, yes.

**Ms HUPPERT** — Can I just follow up on that as we are on the topic? My understanding is that the funding is not just the actual laying of the line but also stabling and signalling and everything else that goes along with it.

**Dr STONE** — Yes.

**Ms HUPPERT** — I know the Department of Transport in its evidence to us was quite open about the fact that it is not just physically laying the line; it is grade separation, stabling and adjustments to other lines in the area to make sure everything moves smoothly. That is evidence that has been given to us. I just want to know about your experience. You have told us what you have done but not what your qualifications are. In making this assessment, what are your qualifications in terms of the costing of a major engineering project such as this?

**Dr STONE** — No, that is why I say I am not an engineer, and that is why I look at those figures and say, 'That seems like a very large number'.

**Ms HUPPERT** — But you have no technical knowledge in the area to be able to make that assessment.

**Dr STONE** — No, but when I look at the list of things — as you say, all of those things are in the costing — it makes it very hard to be absolutely sure what it is we are paying for through the actual laying of the line.

**Mr BARBER** — I go back to what you were starting to say in one of your previous answers about these V/Line and metropolitan train conflicts, and then you went off talking about Switzerland. What exactly is the problem as you see it with that in Melbourne that needs to be fixed or addressed to run more trains on the existing network?

**Dr STONE** — I think it is to do with the fact that we have a very complicated set of stopping patterns with our metropolitan trains. I understand there are something like 27 different stopping patterns on the Pakenham line, which makes it very difficult to work out where the opportunities are to run an express service from the

Latrobe Valley on that line that is not competing with the suburban trains. If you have such a complicated set of operating patterns for your suburban trains, it is very easy to get your express train from the valley caught behind those trains. The simplified operating pattern allows you to timetable your trains through the suburbs more reliably.

We also have some interesting operating patterns in that the Latrobe Valley trains go through Flinders Street, through Southern Cross and out to South Kensington before they turn back.

**Mr BARBER** — South Kensington?

**Dr STONE** — Yes. I have heard people from the department say that that is the way they have always been. I certainly remember the trains to the Latrobe Valley and to Yarram starting from platform 1 at Flinders Street and never crossing — —

**Mr BARBER** — It might have been Princes Bridge in those days.

**Dr STONE** — No, it was platform 1 at Flinders Street where I used to get the train to go to Wilsons Promontory National Park when I was at school. So this idea that they have always done that means always in the operational memory of staff in the Department of Transport at the moment. But because there has been such a turnover a lot of these inefficient operating patterns, which we were able to do when we were running fewer suburban trains because we have such large track capacity between Flinders Street and Southern Cross and through North Melbourne, are causing a problem now that we are trying to increase the number of suburban trains, and we still have that as an operating issue.

There are quite a number of different inefficiencies that we have built into the way we put V/Line and suburban trains together. I do not think we have explored fully the extent to which we can get more capacity out of the existing system, particularly when we have — and we are building more on the Altona line — passing loops and other pieces of infrastructure which I know operators of other systems feel Melbourne is blessed with and would love to have in their operations in London and other places.

**Ms HUPPERT** — I am following up on the answer you gave to Mr Barber's question. Could you elaborate on what you mean by complicated stopping patterns? Is that a combination of express and stopping all stations?

**Dr STONE** — Yes.

**Ms HUPPERT** — In other words, what you are saying is that the downside of offering some flexibility is that it may cause some complications.

**Dr STONE** — Yes.

**Ms HUPPERT** — But is that a side effect of giving flexibility to commuters?

**Dr STONE** — No. That is good question that you raise, because that whole question of how you provide flexibility at the same time as being able to run a system efficiently is the core of network planning. With the stopping patterns I am referring to on the Pakenham line it is often hard to predict which stops your express train will stop at.

**Ms HUPPERT** — It is quite clear in the timetable.

**Dr STONE** — Yes, but that means that a user of a particular train has to learn the timetable for that train, and that learning does not help them understand the system at other times of the day. A system which provides flexible travel arrangements but with simplified stopping patterns is one that I understand the new franchisee of the rail system is interested in bringing to Melbourne. It would mean that you would know that your train would stop at Dandenong and that the intermediate stations were Caulfield and Richmond. If you wanted to get to either of those intermediate stations you could get off the train then and that the next train following would take you to those stations. It really comes down to the point that to provide an effective system which provides flexibility people need to and do learn to accept the necessity of making transfers. You cannot design a system which is effective and efficient unless people move from one vehicle to another. The idea of being able to have every person's journey by public transport available in a single vehicle avoids the reality that the efficiency

public transport requires is that you have multiple people in the vehicle at any one time. You cannot link everybody's destination to everybody's origin.

**Ms HUPPERT** — What you are really talking about is a metro-type system, which is what is proposed in the Victorian Transport Plan.

**Dr STONE** — A simplified rail system is a metro.

**Ms HUPPERT** — Yes, which is what is proposed in the Victorian Transport Plan. If you read the plan, that is what it proposes; so really that is what you are advocating.

**Dr STONE** — I am advocating simplified operating patterns, but that does not necessarily require new tunnels and things like that.

**Ms HUPPERT** — No, but I think, as I mentioned in one of my previous questions, what we are talking about is a multifaceted approach, and one of those approaches is that metro-type system that we are moving towards.

**Dr STONE** — Yes, that simplified pattern, and then you also need the simplified pattern of the routes and timetables of all the supporting services.

**Ms HUPPERT** — Which again is the aim of the bus review.

**Dr STONE** — I do not — —

**Ms HUPPERT** — We disagree on that.

**Dr STONE** — We disagree on the purpose of the bus review, but I do not think there is anything in the objectives of the bus review that says, 'You will develop a network timetable'. It is still about providing a diversion to pick up one or two extra passengers. But that is a question we have already agreed to disagree on.

**Mr O'DONOHUE** — To follow on, Doctor, from the announcements the government has made about some of these capital works, do you think the work around simplifying and integrating the timetable and different modes of transport should have been done before some of the decisions about capital investment were made?

**Dr STONE** — Yes. Ideally that would be the way that you would do it: you would develop the offering that you would like to make to the public and you would work out what infrastructure you need to actually make it possible to deliver that.

**Mr BARBER** — Could this current configuration explain why the vast majority of rail users, particularly in peaks, are just coming all the way to the city? We are seeing about 50 per cent of all passengers getting off when they get to the city, and at the time of morning peak it is a much higher proportion. Effectively you come from wherever it is you get on to the city, but very few people are getting off along the way.

**Dr STONE** — Yes. That is a combination of our land-use planning and our public transport planning, because we have not made it possible for people's jobs to be in places that are accessible by public transport other than in the city.

**Mr BARBER** — But I was asking about this specific timetabling pattern issue.

**Dr STONE** — Yes.

**Mr BARBER** — Effectively, the way you are describing it, you turn up to the station and you wait for a train that takes you where you want to go. It is very complicated to go anywhere other than the city necessarily.

**Dr STONE** — Yes, that is what I am saying. We do not have a system which makes it easy for people to make journeys other than to the centre. When we have the demographic pattern where we have more people working in the city and living along the rail corridors, they say, 'Oh, the train does provide an option for me as petrol prices rise'. But if you are anybody else, the public transport system does not provide you with a similar option.

**Mr BARBER** — Apart from Switzerland, which you say has been doing it consistently for 30 years, who else has taken on that task of sort of untangling a legacy system to get more value out of it, as opposed to Perth, where they just built a whacking new line and — guess what — everybody used it?

**Dr STONE** — Yes. Most of the other examples of cities which have built good networks — for example, Vancouver — have started from the situation of having almost no rail-based public transport. So in terms of untangling a legacy system, that is the issue that confronts us. We have to find our own way in doing that.

**Mr BARBER** — It seems we have an enormous number of kilometres of track, but I am not sure how fully utilised all those tracks are.

**Dr STONE** — Yes, right.

**Mr BARBER** — I do not even know what the most similar city to Melbourne is in terms of that extensive suburban-style rail network.

**Dr STONE** — No. Because Melbourne built itself around its rail services in the 19th century and the early 20th century we have a pattern of suburban developments which is different to other cities but which is still quite public transport friendly. As I said quite early on in my evidence, the radial nature of people's travel, even if it is not to an end point in the city, means that people still tend to move within their radial corridor. Sixty per cent of all movements are within local government areas. It is that sort of trip pattern, which is broken down by orbital freeways but which still exists to a large extent, which an integrated system can cater for much better than it does today.

**The DEPUTY CHAIR** — Are there any last quick questions for Dr Stone? Thanks very much for your time, Dr Stone.

**Witness withdrew.**