

Public transport failing to make inroads, says group

PUBLIC transport use in Melbourne's north-east is lagging as a result of the poor quality and reach of services, a community group has told the State Government.

Friends of Banyule's damning appraisal was delivered to the Transport Department, which is reviewing local bus services.

It drew attention to 2008 figures showing an increase of just 5.7 per cent in Banyule's bus patronage compared with 8.1 per cent for all of Melbourne. The group's Marion Ware said this

came as no surprise, considering many Yallambie, Viewbank and Greensborough residents lived more than 400 metres from a regular transport service.

The group also highlighted a lack of reliable connections between bus services and the Hurstbridge line as a reason for the "pathetically small number" of residents catching public transport to the city.

She said buses needed to operate longer and more frequently if public transport was to become a serious alternative to car travel. "It is not realistic to expect any significant buy-in to available bus ser-

vices if the headway is greater than 30 minutes," she said. The group has called for 30 minutes to be the maximum interval for neighbourhood buses and 10 to 15 minutes for major services, all operating seven days a week.

A Transport Department workshop will be at Ivanhoe on Wednesday, from 1pm to 4pm. For details, call 9221 1952.

— Michael Quin

• **How is the bus service in your area? Email Mquin@fairfax.com.au**