

Friends of Banyule

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3 March 2010

The Honourable Martin Pakula MLC
Minister for Public Transport
Level 36, 121 Exhibition Street
Melbourne
VIC 3000

Dear Mr Pakula

Banyule/ Darebin/ Moreland Bus Review

Friends of Banyule is a community organisation that is dedicated to the protection of the Banyule Flats, Warringal Parklands, Yarra Flats, Bolin Bolin Billabong and other significant green wedge areas in our community for this and future generations.

We have observed the unsustainable growth in private road traffic, both in the City of Banyule and in wider Melbourne which has increasingly compromised the natural environment and which now threaten our existence through climate change.

We are therefore particularly interested in the initiatives the Victorian government needs to take in response to the review of route bus services in the Cities of Banyule, Darebin and Moreland which has been recently completed for the Department of Transport.

We are particularly concerned about:

- the increase in car dependency in the inner northern suburbs of Melbourne which are covered by the review. It is evident that this is due to the fact that the public transport system has been unable to cater for growth in demand and that current services do not meet the needs of residents;
- the potential growth of principal and major activity centres in the area and the failure to provide sufficient quality public transport as well as walking and cycling access to cater for these centres. The Greensborough Principal Activity Centre and the Heidelberg Major Activity Centre and Medical Precinct are of particular relevance in this regard; and
- the growth of road traffic within in the review area resulting from growth beyond the review area, especially in the north and west which are also lacking in public transport.

It is very clear to Friends of Banyule that the enhancement of route bus services is vital for the maintenance of a sustainable urban environment in the middle northern suburbs of Melbourne and to protect our valuable natural environment. Unfortunately, bus services have for too long been the poor cousin in Melbourne's public transport system, largely provided to those without any other choice rather than as a viable mainstream form of transport for everyone.

You may have seen that the major issues to which the Friends of Banyule drew attention in its submission to the bus service review (copy attached) included the need to increase the frequency of many services, together with improved services on weekends, greater connectivity with other public transport services, especially the Hurstbridge rail service and, in important cases, more direct services than those currently provided.

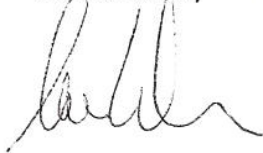
Whilst some of the necessary changes can be made by reorganising existing services, additional resources are essential to bring services to the necessary standard. In this regard we are very concerned that recent announcements of service changes and spending arising from bus reviews elsewhere in Melbourne have been very modest indeed. This leaves the concern that any improvements in service arising from the Banyule/ Darebin/ Moreland review will be equally limited and inadequate.

We therefore seek your undertaking that:

- necessary increases in resources will be provided by the Victorian government in response to the review in order to upgrade the route bus services in the review area to permit a significant quantifiable increase in public transport patronage and a parallel reduction in car dependency; and
- that service improvements are synchronised with reviews of route bus services in contiguous areas of Melbourne to maximise public transport trips across a wider area of metropolitan Melbourne.

We look forward to your early and favourable response on this important matter.

Yours sincerely



Marion Ware
President, Friends of Banyule

Att.



Office of the Minister for Public Transport

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Ms Marion Ware
President
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Dear Ms Ware

BANYULE / DAREBIN / MORELAND BUS REVIEW

Thank you for your letter of 4 March 2010 to the Minister for Public Transport regarding the Banyule/Darebin/Moreland Bus Service Review. I am replying on the Minister's behalf.

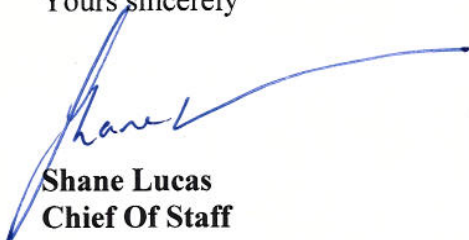
The Recommendation Report for the Banyule/Darebin/Moreland Bus Service Review has been delivered and is currently being considered by the Department of Transport (DOT).

Public submissions and community workshops have highlighted a number of bus service priorities. All community feedback will be considered in the plan for future bus service upgrades in the Banyule/Darebin/Moreland area. The Government will prioritise bus service improvements that will bring immediate and far reaching benefits to the local community.

Outcomes of the review will be announced on the DOT website at <www.transport.vic.gov.au> and in local media. I thank the Friends of Banyule for its valuable contribution to the Banyule/Darebin/Moreland Bus Service Review.

If you have any queries, please contact Christopher Welsh of DOT on telephone (03) 9655 2095.

Yours sincerely



Shane Lucas
Chief Of Staff

8 APR 2010

