



Thursday February 9, 2006

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Time for Batchelor to 'Get On Track'

URGENT investment is needed in public transport if Melbourne is to regain its title as World's Most Liveable City, according to a new report to be released by the Coalition for People's Transport today.

The report *Transport and Liveability: A Path to a Sustainable Victoria* will be released at the launch of a major campaign calling for Transport Minister Peter Batchelor and the Bracks Government to make major investments in public transport infrastructure – particularly in Melbourne's outer-eastern suburbs.

The on-going campaign will include public meetings, a cyber action and distributing thousands of leaflets calling on Peter Batchelor to 'Get on Track'.

*Transport and Liveability: A Path to a Sustainable Victoria* has been released to coincide with a meeting today by Premier Steve Bracks, Treasurer John Brumby and Transport Minister Peter Batchelor to discuss their own Transport and Liveability statement which is due for release in April.

The report – from the coalition of environment, welfare and transport users groups - outlines the negative impacts Melbourne's car-dependency is having on our health, environment, disposable incomes and communities and calls on the Government to take bold steps to fix the problems.

Environment Victoria sustainable transport campaigner Louise Sales said: "In the past decade the Government has spent \$3,872 million on major road expansion projects and only \$125 million on rail expansion projects. It's time for the Government to address this appalling imbalance and make some serious investments in rail infrastructure."

Friends of the Earth national liaison officer Cam Walker said: "Growing traffic levels are putting our quality of life at risk from increasing congestion, pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Roads have been prioritised over public transport for too long - it's time for Transport Minister Peter Batchelor to get on track!"

Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) policy analyst Kate Colvin said: "Car-dependence is a major cost for outer suburban households who own twice as many cars and drive five times as far to work as people in the inner city. Improving public transport will allow people to drastically cut their travel spending."

Public Transport Users Association spokesperson Alex Makin said: "It's crucial the State Government commits to building the Rowville rail line. The Wellington Road SmartBus is only a short-term solution and the Government cannot rest on its laurels thinking it has solved Rowville's public transport issues."

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Knox councillor Mick Van De Vreede said: "Public transport is widely acknowledged as a major issue in the local community. Although the government has begun taking small steps to rectify the problems, the time had come for serious action to give Knox residents a fair deal."

Youth Affairs Council of Victoria executive officer Georgie Ferrari said: "Poor public transport restricts young people's independence, employment opportunities and access to education. "Young people's opportunities will continue to be cut short unless public transport in the outer suburbs is improved, particularly given the high population growth expected in the Knox area."

**The campaign launch will be held noon Thursday February 9 on the corner of Stud and Wellington Roads, Rowville (Melway ref: 81 H3)**

**A pdf version of *Transport and Liveability: A Path to a Sustainable Victoria* is available at [www.melbourneontrack.org.au](http://www.melbourneontrack.org.au)**

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