

# TRANSPORT WORKS AND SERVICES BILL 1976.

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## EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

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The Bill seeks Parliamentary sanction for expenditure of funds allotted to the Railways and for advances in respect of road transport services from the Works and Services Account for the 1976-77 financial year.

The Commonwealth Government has decided not to support the commencement of any new Urban Public Transport Improvement Projects in 1976-77 and has not provided funds for the continuation of the Vehicle Replacement Programme. Commonwealth funds have been provided for the continuation of other approved projects commenced in previous years under the Urban Public Transport Agreement and approval is being sought to transfer some of these funds to meet Victoria's commitments for the purchase of new trains.

This Bill relates to the allocation of funds from both State and Commonwealth sources and the amounts included in Item 4 represent allocations for urban development projects—previous Bills have only related to the allocation of funds from State sources.

As the Act must continue to operate until a new Act is passed and has received the Royal Assent—possibly late in 1977—provision is made in the Bill for sufficient authority (\$84,280,000) to cover estimated expenditure up till 31st December, 1977.

The 1977 Act, when it comes into operation, will automatically cancel the unexhausted provision in the 1976 Act.

Sub-items 101 to 112 of Item 1, 201 to 205 of Item 2, and 301 of Item 3 refer to annual provisions, i.e. continuing works and purposes on which expenditure is incurred year by year.

Sub-item 113 is provided to meet expenditure incurred by the Railways on works undertaken on behalf of other bodies. This expenditure is charged to the Works and Services Account and will be progressively recouped to the Consolidated Fund. Arrangements are currently in progress for the Railways to receive payments from agencies prior to undertaking chargeable works.

Sub-items 114 and 115 make provision for expenditure on the duplication of the Melbourne-Geelong line between Little River and Corio, and the electrification of the line between Altona Junction and Werribee.

Sub-items 303 and 304 of Item 3 refer to specific works, each of which is estimated to cost \$100,000 or more. As previously referred to, the sub-items listed under Item 4 are in respect of expenditure to improve urban services. These comprise both specific works and continuing programmes.

The following additional information is supplied for the assistance of Honorable Members in considering the various items and sub-items in the Bill :—

### ITEM 1—WAY AND WORKS.

### ITEM 2—ROLLING STOCK, EQUIPMENT, MACHINERY AND OTHER WORKS.

The sub-items listed under Items 1 and 2 relate in the main to works to be undertaken outside the urban area. Expenditure proposed on projects under the general headings of stations and yards, locomotive accommodation, signalling, track relaying, communications, plant and equipment, and wagon construction has been programmed as an essential step in the upgrading of railway services to the standards necessary to enable the Railways to operate successfully in a commercial and more competitive environment.

This expenditure will result in improved freight yard and freight terminal facilities ; better station facilities ; upgraded and strengthened main line tracks and the relaying of sub-standard tracks ; upgrading and modernization of the communications network ; provision of plant and equipment for track maintenance, and to facilitate freight handling ; and construction of modern, high speed bogie wagons and vans, many of which will cater for specific traffics, such as containers, motor vehicles and steel.

Other projects which will be carried out under these items, such as installation of flashing lights and boom barriers, and reconstruction of bridges will to a lesser extent also play a part in the overall plan to upgrade railways, but primarily fall into the category of works which increase safety factors, for road users as well as rail users.

Allocations for grade separation at level crossings are now made from the Transport Fund, consequently no provision has been made for these works in this Bill.

Changes in Railway accounting procedures have been made this year to transfer to working expenses, maintenance costs on track re-laying and bridge renewals which were previously charged to Works and Services Account. This has resulted in lower provisions being made for sub-items 104 and 110.

Expenditure will also be incurred on additional or improved dwelling accommodation, mainly in country areas, occupied by railway staff. The progressive programme of provision of, or improvement to, staff amenities will be continued this year ; as also will the programme of conversion of the high tension electricity supply for the Melbourne electrified lines from 25 to 50 Hz, because of eventual discontinuance of 25 Hz supply from the Newport Power station.

To meet the present traffic needs of the Railways additional diesel electric locomotives are being purchased—ten new locomotives have been delivered and a further ten locomotives are due for delivery during the currency of this Act. These locomotives will improve Railway efficiency and the Railways' ability to meet traffic demands.

Allocation is made to continue the programme of modernizing the rail wagon fleet with bogie wagons.

#### ITEM 3—CONSTRUCTION OF NEW LINES OF RAILWAY, ETC.

Provision is made in the Bill for expenditure on the construction of a new railway from the river entrance docks area to connect with existing rail facilities. This expenditure is subject to the results of an inquiry currently underway on this railway.

The Bill also provides funds for the purchase of land and some necessary work associated with freeway construction for the Eastern Railway.

Funds are required to cover the estimated expenditure for reports, inspections and surveys, and the preparation of any necessary plans and estimates during the currency of the Act. Provision is made also to cover expenditure on any new line that may be authorized during the currency of the Act.

#### ITEM 4—URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.

In accordance with the Government's policy to attract commuters to public transport, a programme of projects designed to improve the standards of service for urban rail travellers has been approved.

The urban transport improvement projects on which expenditure will be incurred during the currency of this Act are—

- Construction of new suburban stations.
- Reconstruction of existing stations.
- Extension of automatic power signalling and amalgamation of signal boxes.
- South Kensington-Footscray : Two additional tracks.
- Caulfield-Mordialloc : Additional track.
- Sunshine-Deer Park West : Duplication.
- Macleod-Greensborough : Duplication.
- Ringwood-Bayswater/Croydon : Duplication.
- Upgrading urban communication lines, facilities and equipment.
- Melbourne-Glen Waverley line : Upgrading.
- Geelong : Various minor projects.
- Provision of new suburban electric trains.

The provision of additional tracks, together with the extension of power signalling, will permit additional peak period services to be run on suburban lines, and improved services to outer areas.

It is proposed to complete the construction of two stations ; Kananook (located between Seaford and Frankston) and Yarraman (located between Noble Park and Dandenong) and also the track up-grading projects between South Kensington and Footscray, and Sunshine-Deer Park West.

Provision has been made for continuation of the present delivery rate of ten new suburban electric trains per annum.

#### ITEM 5—ROAD TRANSPORT SERVICES.

Provision is made in the Bill for the making of advances in respect of road transport services.

In accordance with the Government's decision to assist the extensive private enterprise segment of public transport, provision has been made for loans to private bus operators for the purchase of new buses to improve vehicle standards.