

TRANSPORT WORKS AND SERVICES BILL 1977.

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM.

The Bill seeks Parliamentary sanction for expenditure of funds allocated to the Railways and for advances in respect of road transport services from the Works and Services Account for the 1977-78 financial year.

Commonwealth funds have been provided for the continuation of 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. The Commonwealth has also agreed to provide a further \$1 million in the current year towards the acquisition of new trains.

The provisions included in Item 4 of the Bill include the allocation of funds from both State and Commonwealth sources for urban development projects.

The components of the total estimated funds available to the Railways in 1977-78 compared with the 1976-77 allocations are as follows :

	1976-77 \$M	1977-78 \$M	Percentage Change
State Funds	31.98	36.30	+13.5
Commonwealth Grants	8.80 (a)	6.85 (b)	-22.2
Railway Funds	1.54	2.81 (c)	+82.5
	42.32	45.96	+ 8.6

(a) In addition to this amount, the Commonwealth paid \$4.65 million towards cost escalation on approved joint Commonwealth/State projects. This was a recoupment of certain State expenditure in previous years.

(b) The Commonwealth allocation for 1977-78 is tentative and includes an estimate of funds available for escalation which is subject to confirmation by the Commonwealth.

(c) Railway funds available for capital works are derived mainly from the sale of certain Railway assets, and consequently the figure shown in the above table for 1977-78 is an estimate.

As the Act must continue to operate until a new Act is passed and has received the Royal Assent—possibly late in 1978—provision is made in the Bill for sufficient authority (\$84,900,000) to cover estimated expenditure up till 31st December, 1978.

The 1978 Act, when it comes into operation, will automatically cancel the unexhausted provision in the 1977 Act.

Sub-items 101 to 113 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-items 114 to 116 of Item 1 and 303 and 304 of Item 3 refer to specific works, each of which is estimated to cost \$100,000 or more.

The sub-items listed under Item 4 are in respect of expenditure to improve urban services. These comprise both specific works and continuous programmes.

Provision is also made in sub-item 302 of Item 3 to cover expenditure on any new line that may be authorized during currency of the Act.

An explanatory statement, setting out for each sub-item, actual expenditure during the 1976-77 financial year, proposed expenditure in 1977-78 and the proposed provision in the Bill, appears on page No. 4 of this Memorandum.

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 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 made from the Transport Fund, consequently no provision has been made for these works in this Bill.

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.

Item 1 makes provision for the following specific projects :

Geelong Line : Duplication of Little River—Corio section.

Somerton : Provision of a bogie exchange centre.

South Dynon : Provision of an interstate container terminal.

Work has already commenced on duplication of the remaining single track section of the Geelong line.

Proposals for the establishment of a bogie exchange centre at Somerton and for an interstate container terminal at South Dynon are being investigated. No funds have been provided for these two projects in the current financial year but provision has been made for possible expenditure in 1978-79.

To meet the present traffic needs of the Railways twenty additional diesel electric locomotives are being purchased—at 19.10.77, 16 new locomotives had been delivered. These locomotives will improve Railway efficiency and the Railways' ability to meet traffic demands.

Sub-item 113—Agency Works makes provision for expenditure on works undertaken on behalf of other bodies in those cases where expenditure is funded initially from the Works and Services Account. The recoupment of costs are paid to the credit of the State Loans Repayment Fund.

An allocation has been 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 possible 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 a decision being made to proceed with this project.

The Bill also provides funds for the purchase of land 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.
- Caulfield—Mordialloc : additional track.
- Macleod—Greensborough : duplication.
- Ringwood—Bayswater/Croydon : duplication.
- Upgrading urban communication lines, facilities and equipment.
- Provision of passenger interchange facilities.
- Provision of new suburban electric trains.
- Altona Junction—Werribee : electrification.

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.

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.