

20 January 2010

## New Minister needs to stand up for public transport

The Metropolitan Transport Forum (MTF) welcomes the new Minister for Public Transport, Martin Pakula, who has the chance to make public transport the number one Government priority.

MTF chair, Cr Jackie Fristacky said that former Minister Lynne Kosky fought hard for her portfolio, but her endeavours were outweighed by road interests being given higher priority financing for more freeways.

Mr Pakula brings an economics degree to his new task and will understand that rail transport is cost effective for a growing city, being three times as efficient as road transport.

His first tasks are to improve services, timetabling and connectivity, and upgrade antiquated signaling, power systems, tracks and trains.

He must also win funding from the Premier and Treasury for more new trains and trams, with 21<sup>st</sup> century electronic and air conditioning systems.

A new line to the Doncaster zone, linked to the Ringwood/Box Hill line, will take the pressure off the Eastern Freeway and Hoddle St, and destroy the case for a new freeway through the scenic Bulleen/Templestowe area.

More frequent fast trains to regional towns will encourage population movements to such cheaper land precincts as the Latrobe Valley, Seymour, Kyneton, Ballarat, Bendigo, and Geelong/Colac.

Victorians expect the new Minister to bring economic and environmental strength to his portfolio.

MTF councils look forward to supporting the new Minister in ensuring Melbourne's public transport system meets the huge public transport shortfall in Melbourne's middle and outer suburbs.

The MTF represents 18 Councils covering over 2 million people in metropolitan Melbourne.

***Media enquiries:***

***Cr Jackie Fristacky, Chair, Metropolitan Transport Forum***

***0412 597 794***