

Article rank | 25 Aug 2010 | The Melbourne Times

# Parties go public about public transport

FOLLOWING in the footsteps of his federal leaders, Labor's state Transport Minister Martin Pakula will line up against his opposite numbers in the Liberal and Greens camps to face a grilling from commuters in a town hall-style public forum next month.

The Melbourne Transport Forum is the first in a series of meetings in Melbourne, Yarra and Moreland organised by the MTF and TMT. The municipalities cover what are expected to be hotly contested seats at the November 27 election, including Melbourne, Richmond and Brunswick.

MTF chairwoman and City of Yarra councillor Jackie Fristacky said public transport would be a vote-decider for many inner-city residents.

"Our recent online survey showed that people see improvements in public transport as a high priority. There's no doubt that public transport, planning and infrastructure will be major topics in the state election."

People will have the chance to question the candidates on any transport-related issues. Organisers expect traffic on Hoddle Street, the low frequency of Upfield line trains and reliability and security to dominate the discussion.

Opposition transport spokesman Terry Mulder is yet to release the Liberals' comprehensive transport plan, while Greens MLC Greg Barber has promised to scrap expensive road projects in favour of extensive improvements to the public transport network.

– Rosemary Bolger

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